

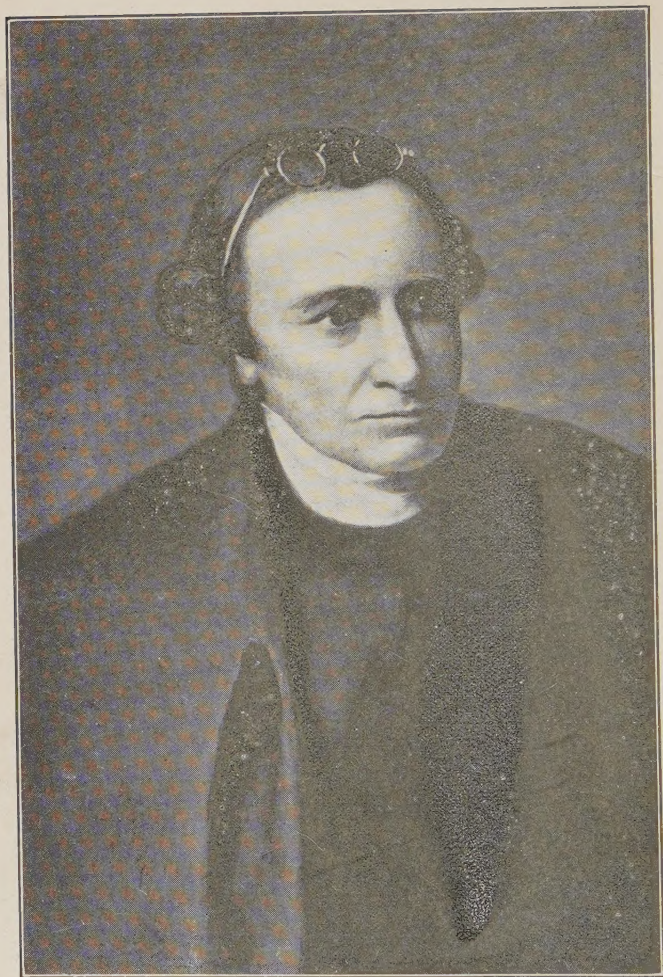
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PATRICK HENRY

# MAKERS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

PATRICK HENRY

BY

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NEW YORK

1904

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LIFE OF  
PATRICK HENRY

BY

ALEXANDER H. EVERETT, LL.D.



# PATRICK HENRY

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## CHAPTER I

Birth and Parentage.—Education.—Commences Business as a Merchant.—Fails, and attempts Agriculture.—Second unsuccessful Attempt in Trade.—~~Marriage~~.—Admitted to the Bar.

PATRICK HENRY is in more than in one particular among the most remarkable characters of the Revolutionary period of our country. (He is declared by Jefferson to have been “the greatest orator that ever lived,” and “the person who, beyond all question, gave the first impulse to the movement which terminated in the Revolution.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever exaggeration, if any, may be supposed to have crept into these sweeping statements, it is certain that the merits and services which had power to call them forth from such a quarter must have been of no ordinary kind.

Indeed, the accounts that have been transmitted to us of the actual effects of his eloquence upon the minds of his hearers, though resting apparently on the best authority, seem almost fabulous, and certainly surpass any that we have on record of the results produced by the most distinguished orators of ancient or modern Europe. Something must

probably be allowed for the excited imagination of the authors of these accounts; but the necessity for making this allowance proves, of itself, the extent to which Henry possessed what may be regarded as the essence of the highest kind of eloquence, together with the power of strongly exciting the imagination of his hearers.

✓ His claim to the honor of having given the first impulse to the Revolutionary movement, is a question hardly susceptible of a satisfactory solution, since no event, prior to the battle of Lexington and the Declaration of Independence, was so decidedly different in character from a variety of others occurring at about the same time, as to merit, in contradistinction to them, the praise of being the first step in the progress of the Revolution. It is certain, however, that, in one of the two leading colonies, during the period immediately preceding the Revolution, Henry was constantly in advance of the most ardent patriots, and that he suggested and carried into effect, by his immediate personal influence, measures that were opposed as premature and violent by all the other eminent supporters of the cause of Liberty. It was the good-fortune of Henry to enjoy, during his lifetime, the appropriate reward of his extraordinary merits, and the almost unbounded admiration and respect of his countrymen.

✓ By general acknowledgment, the greatest orator of his day; elevated by his transcendent talents to a sort of supremacy in the deliberative assemblies of which he was occasionally a member, and the courts of justice in which he exercised his profession;

clothed, whenever he chose to accept them, with the highest executive functions in the gift of the people; happy in his domestic relations and private circumstances,—his career was one of almost unbroken prosperity. He has also been eminently fortunate in the manner in which the history of his life has been written. While the recollection of his eloquence and the admiration of his character were still fresh in the minds of numerous surviving contemporaries, the task of collecting and recording the expressions of them, which were circulating in conversation, or merely ephemeral notes, was undertaken by one whose kindred eloquence and virtues rendered him on every account the fittest person to do justice to the subject. In the following sketch, I can claim little other merit, than that of condensing, with perhaps some few not very important modifications and additions, the glowing biography of Wirt.

The gifted author is represented, on the same high authority alluded to above, that of Jefferson, as having been at times led by the enthusiasm with which he entered into his subject to the verge of fiction. Let us also apply to his work the title which the great German poet, Goethe, prefixed to his own Autobiography,—*Poetry and Truth*. The narrative carries with it unquestionable evidence of authenticity, as well in the known character of the writer as in the authorities that are cited in support of every important statement, while it is written with so much warmth and elegance that it possesses throughout all the charm of poetry, and perhaps pro-

duces, at times, a similar illusion. Although some few passages are a little too-highly colored for the eye of good-taste, there are few persons of eminence who, after reading the whole, would not feel the wish which Queen Katharine, in the play, expressed in regard to her attendant, Griffith, that they might find themselves as fond and faithful a chronicler.

¶The family of Patrick Henry was of Scottish origin. ¶His father, John Henry, was a native of Aberdeen; and he numbered among his family connections some of the distinguished literary men of the day, having been a nephew, in the maternal line, to the historian Robertson, and cousin to David Henry, the brother-in-law to Edward Cave, and his successor in the conduct of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. ¶John Henry emigrated to Virginia some time before the year 1730. He is said to have enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Dinwiddie, afterwards governor of the colony, who introduced him to the elder Colonel Syme, of Hanover County. In the family of the latter, Henry become domesticated, and, after the death of the colonel, married his widow and resided on the estate. He appears to have enjoyed much consideration among his fellow-citizens, having been colonel of his regiment, principal surveyor of the county, and, for many years, presiding magistrate of the county court. Some years after his emigration, his brother Patrick, a clergyman of the Church of England, followed him to Virginia, and became, by his influence, minister of St. Paul's parish in Hanover, a place which he filled through life with high distinction. Both



brothers were conspicuous for their loyalty to the king and their attachment to the church.

The widow of Colonel Syme, who became, as has been said, the wife of John Henry and the mother of Patrick, was a native of Hanover County, and a daughter of the family of Winston, one of the most respectable in the colony. So far as the eloquence of Patrick Henry may be supposed to have been in any degree hereditary, it seems to have been transmitted to him through the maternal line. His mother is represented as having been remarkable for a fluent and easy elocution, and her brother, Judge Winston, was declared by a contemporary, who knew him well, to have been the greatest orator whom he had ever heard, Patrick Henry alone excepted. When the militia of Virginia were ordered, soon after Braddock's defeat, to the frontiers, the company to which Winston belonged, and of which he was lieutenant, were so much disheartened by the severity of the service that they were on the point of breaking out into mutiny, when Winston, by a well-timed stump speech, succeeded in restoring order and inspired them with so much enthusiasm that they called upon their officers to lead them at once against the enemy.

It appears from these statements that the family of Patrick Henry was among the most distinguished in the colony. He was the second of nine children, and was born on the 29th of May, 1736, at the family seat in Hanover County, called Studley. His father removed, not long after, to another seat in the same county, then called Mount Brilliant, and

now the Retreat; and it was here that Patrick was educated. The family, though evidently in easy circumstances, does not seem to have been wealthy. The father had opened a grammar school in his own house; and Patrick, after having acquired the elements of learning at an infant school in the neighborhood, was taken home, at ten years of age, to continue his studies. Under his father's tuition, he obtained some little smattering of the Latin language and of mathematics. He had no inclination whatever for book learning. As the discipline of such a school was not likely to be severe, he seems to have indulged, without much restraint, his taste for rural sports and solitary rambles through the neighboring fields and forests. At this period, he showed no sign of the high intellectual qualities for which he was afterwards distinguished. His personal appearance and manners were coarse and awkward, his dress neglected, and his faculties entirely obscured by habitual indolence. In mixed company he contributed little or nothing to the conversation, but is said to have listened with attention, and to have been able afterwards to repeat much of what had been said, with intelligent comments on the characters of the speakers. This is the only particular in his youthful habits that has since been recollected as having indicated in any degree his future superiority.

Finding him wholly indisposed for literary and professional pursuits, his father undertook to establish him in trade; and, after placing him for a year in the counting-room of a neighboring merchant,

furnished him and his brother William with a small capital, upon which they commenced business. William, it seems, was still more indolent than his brother; so that the management of the common concern devolved chiefly upon Patrick, who displayed as little aptitude for mercantile affairs as he had previously done for study. The confinement which this employment rendered necessary was irksome to him; and, although he was afterwards remarked for a rather thrifty disposition in his pecuniary affairs, the consequence, probably, of early embarrassments, he exhibited at this time an easiness of temper, and a negligence in making his bargains, which were not favorable to the success of the enterprise. Compelled to relinquish his habitual sports, he resorted, as a substitute for them, to music, and learned to play upon the violin and the flute.

He also began, for the first time, to show some taste for reading; and exhibited, with increasing distinctness, the talent for nice observation of character which he had shown in his childhood. He encouraged his customers, when they met in his shop, to discuss questions which he suggested for their consideration; and, without taking much part himself in the debate, derived his principal amusement from comparing their habits of thought and action, as developed in the course of their respective remarks. At other times, he entertained them by narratives gathered from his miscellaneous reading, or framed by himself for the purpose. In these intellectual exercises we begin to perceive the first dawning of the brilliant talents by which, in after-years,

he so often entranced his audience. They seem, however, to have had no very favorable effect upon the success of his enterprise, which, after the experiment of a year, proved a failure. William retired at once from the concern, while Patrick was employed for two or three years afterwards in bringing it to a close as well as he could. In the meantime, at the age of eighteen, he had married Miss Shelton, the daughter of a neighboring farmer, of excellent character, but of narrow worldly fortune.

Unsuccessful alike in letters and in trade, the future orator, or more probably his friends for him, now directed his attention to agriculture. By the joint aid of the two families the newly-married couple were placed upon a small farm, from which, with the aid of one or two slaves, with whom they were also provided, they were to draw by the sweat of their brows the means of subsistence. But the indolent habits, and aversion to systematic labor of any kind, which had occasioned the failure of his former attempts to effect a permanent establishment were equally fatal to this. After an experiment of two years, he abandoned the farm, sold his property at a loss for cash, invested the proceeds in merchandise, and once more attempted fortune in the lottery of trade. In resuming his business as a merchant, he also resumed his former habits of conducting it. He employed, as before, a large portion of his time in conversation with his customers, or in music and light reading; and he frequently closed his warehouse for the purpose of pursuing his favorite recreations in the open air. Thus conducted, it is not

very singular that, after another two years' trial, the second experiment in trade ended, like the former, in bankruptcy.

The position of Henry, in a worldly view, was now sufficiently embarrassing. He had lost all his little property, and had no capacity for supporting his family by any of the usual professions. His connections had done all they could for him. A feebler mind would have probably sunk under this complication of difficulties. Henry, far from being in any degree discouraged, was roused by it to the exertions which alone were necessary to the development of his splendid powers. Possessed, as he was at this time, by an unconquerable passion for amusement, probably nothing but absolute necessity of the most urgent kind could have furnished the spur that was wanting to his success; so that he might afterwards have said, with great propriety, in the words of an ancient, "I should have been ruined, if I had not been ruined." His biographers do not, however, appear to have appreciated his character with perfect correctness, when they attribute these repeated failures, in his attempts in business of different kinds, to mere indolence. His mind was not deficient in a principle of activity, but at this period it took exclusively the direction of amusement. The indispensable necessity of pursuing, with steady industry, the substantial objects of life, had not yet been brought home to him, and he yielded without resistance to the promptings of his naturally exuberant animal spirits. Even at the lowest ebb of his worldly fortunes, his disposition for sport and pleasantry

remained unimpaired. Mr. Jefferson saw him for the first time at this period, and afterwards gave, in a letter to Mr. Wirt, the following account of his appearance and manners. Henry was then twenty-four years of age.

“My acquaintance with Mr. Henry commenced in the year 1759-60. On my way to college, I passed the Christmas holidays at Colonel Dandridge’s, in Hanover, to whom Mr. Henry was a near neighbor. During the festivity of the season, I met him in society every day, and we became well-acquainted, although I was much his junior, being then in my seventeenth year, and he a married man. His manners had something of coarseness in them; his passion was music, dancing, and pleasantry. He excelled in the last, and it attached every one to him. You ask some account of his mind and information at this period; but you will recollect that we were almost continually engaged in the usual revelries of the season. The occasion, perhaps, as much as his idle disposition, prevented his engaging in any conversation which might give the measure of his mind or information. Opportunity was not, indeed, wholly wanting, because Mr. John Campbell was there, who had married Mrs. Spotswood, the sister of Colonel Dandridge. He was a man of science, and often introduced conversation on scientific subjects. Mr. Henry had, a little before, broken up his store, or rather it had broken him up; but his misfortunes were not to be traced either in his countenance or his conduct.”

But though the absorbing passion for pleasure,



which at this time formed the distinguishing characteristic of Henry's mind, had been fatal to his success in the various employments which he had hitherto attempted, it had not entirely deprived him of proper intellectual culture. During his first experiment in trade, he had devoted, as has been said, a part of his leisure to light reading. In the course of the second, which was of somewhat longer duration, he extended his studies to subjects of a more serious character, and made himself familiar with geography and history, particularly the documentary and political history of Virginia. *Multum, non multa*, (much, but not a great many books,) is the well-known rule for judicious and profitable reading.

This rule was enforced upon Henry by the circumstances of the times and country in which he lived. Cheap literature was not yet in fashion, and in settlements so remote from the central points of civilization as the interior of Virginia then was, the supply of even standard works was not abundant. A person who had acquired a taste for reading could gratify it only by repeated perusals of a few writers. The historians of Greece and Rome, whom he read in English translations, were his favorite study. Livy, in particular, was a sort of manual with him; and he subsequently informed a friend, that, in the earlier part of his life, he made it a rule to read the whole of this charming writer as often at least as once in every year. The Virginian Demosthenes was imitating, perhaps without knowing it, the example of his great prototype, who is said to have

copied the whole of Thucydides eight times with his own hand. The remarkable and significant fact just alluded to shows the vigor with which Henry's naturally elevated mind, though incapable of binding itself down to the uncongenial tasks which had thus far been presented to it, soared above the sphere of its habitual pursuits and pleasures in search of intellectual nutriment suited to its character.

How infinitely preferable was this course of reading, whether considered in its effect on the judgment, the feelings, or the taste, to the confused mass of magazines, reviews, and novels, that occupy the hours of students of the present day! In the constant use of this noble manual we may, no doubt, trace, in no light degree, the energy of purpose, the high tone of moral sentiment, the sound practical wisdom, in short, the Roman cast of character, using the phrase in the best sense, which marked throughout the course of Henry, and which, but for the fact just mentioned, would have been unexplained by any known circumstances in his early pursuits and studies. With such training, however irregularly obtained, and with the splendid capacities which were yet to be developed, it only remained for Henry to place himself in a situation where his talents would be brought into exercise, in order to assume at once the eminent position to which they entitled him. The moment was, however, critical; another mistake in the choice of a profession, like those which he had already made, and ending in a continuation of his former ill-success, would have condemned him for life to hopeless dependence and utter

insignificance. On the contrary, he was still young enough to reclaim, by a vigorous application of his powers to the uses for which they were intended, the time that he had lost, and to enter, with still unclouded prospects of success, on the business of life.

Everything depended on the course which he was now to take; and his decision proved to be a most fortunate one for himself and his country. Baffled in his efforts to provide for his family in any of the less conspicuous occupations, he resolved to grasp at the highest and most difficult of all, the practice of law. It may be doubted, however, whether his views, in adopting the legal profession, went beyond the acquisition of a moderate subsistence. He was still unconscious of the extent of his abilities, and may, perhaps, have been determined on selecting another employment, by the fact that he could attempt the bar without the necessity of a moneyed capital, rather than by any anticipation of the eminence which he afterwards acquired. His situation rendered it, of course, important to contract as much as possible the time of preparation.

Judge Tyler, the father of the one-time president of the United States, was informed by Henry himself that he devoted one month only to this purpose, during which he read only Coke upon Littleton, and the Virginia statutes. Mr. Jefferson, who was in the college at Williamsburg when Henry came there to obtain his license, was told by himself that he had studied only six weeks. Other accounts fix the time at six, eight, and nine months; but these variations are of little importance. It was not unnatural, that,

under these circumstances, he should have found some difficulty in obtaining the necessary license from the board of examiners, which appears to have consisted of John and Peyton Randolph, Judge Wythe, and Robert C. Nicholas, all of them persons of superior talent and the highest eminence in the profession. According to the account of Mr. Jefferson, who was on the spot at the time, and partially acquainted with the circumstances, though he may not have remembered them so accurately as Henry himself, the two Randolphs, who were persons of great facility of temper, first consented to sign the license, though with great reluctance. Wythe positively refused, and Nicholas at first declined, but finally, after great importunity and promises of future reading, gave his name, which completed the necessary number.

In the account given by Judge Tyler of a conversation which he had with Henry himself on the same subject, he is represented as having said, that, after obtaining the signatures of two of the examiners, he presented himself to John Randolph, afterwards attorney-general of the colony, a profound lawyer and a polished gentleman. Finding how little he had read, and not being favorably impressed with his appearance and manner, Randolph at first refused to examine Henry, but at length, on being told that he had already obtained two signatures, began to interrogate him, though with evident reluctance. The replies made by Henry satisfied him at once that he was no common man. He then entered upon an examination, which lasted several hours, embracing

not only the local and colonial law, but the whole field of jurisprudence, in its widest extent, including the law of nations and general history. In the course of the examination, in order to test the logical ability of the candidate, Randolph disputed some of his positions, and drew him into a discussion, at the close of which he admitted that Henry had the best of the argument. He finally gave his signature, with the flattering remark that he would never be deceived by appearances again; and that, if Henry's industry should be at all proportioned to his genius, he would become very shortly an ornament to his profession.

Such were the auspices under which Patrick Henry was admitted to the bar. Ignorant, as he was, not only of law as a science, and of the most familiar forms of its practical administration, incapable, as is said, of drawing a declaration or making a motion in court, it is not very wonderful that he obtained at first but little employment. His uncle, Judge Winston, states that, during the first four years after he received his license, he remained entirely undistinguished. His circumstances were extremely narrow, and he appears to have resided the greater part of the time with his father-in-law, Mr. Shelton, who then kept a tavern at Hanover court-house. When Shelton was absent from home, Henry officiated in his stead, and probably lent him at other times such aid as was necessary. This fact accounts for the statement which has sometimes been made, and which does not seem to be very far from the truth, that he was at one period in his early life a bar-keeper at a tavern.

The rumor, so far as it is well-founded, adds another to the numerous occupations through which the brilliant orator was compelled to make his way to distinction. At length the clouds that had so long hovered over his prospects cleared away. The celebrated *Parsons' Cause*, as it is still called in Virginia, afforded him the opportunity, which alone was wanting, to establish his powers, and placed him at once at the head of the profession.



## CHAPTER II

### The Parson's Cause.—First Remarkable Exhibition of Henry's Eloquence.

THE account of the Parsons' Cause is one of those passages in the life of Henry in which poetry appears to be in some degree mingled with truth; nor is it easy, with the information now before us, to say with entire certainty what parts of the narrative appertain respectively to one or the other of these departments. The particulars of the affair are briefly as follows:

The Parsons' Cause was an action brought by the Rev. James Maury, in the county court of Hanover County, against the collector of taxes for that county and his sureties, for the recovery of damages for the non-payment of a certain quantity of tobacco, alleged to be due to him on account of his salary. The claim was founded in a statute of the colony, originally passed in the year 1696, and reënacted with amendments, in the year 1748, which fixed the annual stipend of a parish minister at sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco, and authorized him to demand payment in the article itself. He was, of course, at liberty to receive it in any other way that might suit his convenience. The common market price of to-

bacco had, for a long time, remained stationary at two pence the pound, or sixteen shillings and eight pence the hundred, and the clergy were in the habit of commuting the delivery of the article in kind for a money payment calculated on this basis.

In the year 1755, the crop of tobacco having fallen short, the price rose to fifty or sixty shillings the hundred. In order to relieve the planters from the effect of this accidental change in the value of the article, the Legislature passed an Act authorizing them, for the present year, to pay in money such of these debts as might be due in tobacco, at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence the hundred. The Act was to continue in force for ten months, and went into effect immediately, not having contained the clause which was usually inserted in the Acts of the Colonial Legislature, suspending their operation until they should receive the royal assent. No opposition was made by the clergy to the execution of this law, which was regularly carried into effect during the period for which it was enacted.

Three years afterwards, in the year 1758, in consequence of the probability of the occurrence of another short crop, the law of 1755 was reënacted, and, as before, without the clause requiring the royal assent. The clergy now took alarm, and the measure was attacked in a vigorous pamphlet, entitled *The Two-penny Act*, published by the Rev. John Camm, rector of York-Hampton parish, and Episcopalian commissary for the colony. He was answered in two pamphlets, one written by Colonel Richard Bland, and the other by Colonel Landon Carter, in

which the commissary was treated without much ceremony. He replied in a still more pointed pamphlet, entitled *The Colonels Dismounted*. The colonels rejoined, and a war of pamphlets followed, which created great excitement throughout the colony. The popular sentiment appears to have been adverse to the pretensions of the clergy, and at length became so strong that the printers within the colony refused to publish for them, so that Mr. Camm was finally compelled to resort to Maryland for a publisher.

The pamphlets which were elicited by this controversy are still extant, and Mr. Wirt remarks, that "It seems impossible to deny, at this day that the clergy had much the best of the argument." This, however, seems to be a merely technical view of the subject, founded on the idea that the colonial laws were not valid without the royal assent and that the clergy had, of course, retained throughout the whole affair all the rights that were vested in them by the Act of 1748. Such, probably, was the correct construction of the law; but it seems to be clear that the equity of the affair was on the other side, and that, so far as the argument turned upon any other topic than that of strict legal right, the planters were able to make out a very strong case. The Act of 1748 was a liberal and beneficial statute, intended to secure the clergy against the effect of fluctuations in the value of money; and it was hardly fair or honorable in the clergy to take advantage of this act of liberality in the planters, to extort from them, in a time of scarcity, triple the amount of the usual sti-

pend. If the rise in the price of tobacco had been the effect of a depreciation in the value of money, and had extended to all other articles, the equity would have been with the clergy, because they could not have obtained the real value of their usual stipend without receiving it in kind.

But as the rise took place in the article of tobacco only, being the effect of a short crop, while the value of money remained the same, the clergy, by commuting the payment in tobacco for a money payment at the former price, would have received the full amount of their usual salary, and this was all that they could fairly claim. Mr. Wirt remarks that they could not help observing the benefits resulting from the Act to the rich planters, who received fifty or sixty shillings the hundred for their tobacco, while they were paying their tobacco debts at the rate of sixteen shillings and eight pence. He does not seem to have recollected that the rise in the price of tobacco was the effect of a reduction in the quantity. If the planter, by selling a crop of only a-third of the ordinary amount for three times the usual price was able to avoid the injurious effect of a short crop, he was still in no better condition than he would have been if the rise had not occurred; and if he paid his tobacco debts in kind at the existing high prices he sustained an actual loss equal to two-thirds of the amount due. It was not fair, as has been remarked, for the clergy to extort this difference under pretence of a law which the planters had passed for the relief and benefit of the order. If, therefore, the law was with the clergy, the equity was clearly with the plant-

ers. The legal objection to the Act of 1748 was also one of the narrowest kind, and was, in reality, scarcely tenable.

Admitting, as a general rule, that the Acts of a Colonial Legislature were not valid without the royal assent, it could not well be denied that a legislature, situated at such an immense distance from the mother country, must be supposed to possess some discretionary power to proceed without direct authority from home in a case of real necessity, and this was obviously one of that kind. The state of the crop could not be ascertained much in advance of the time when it would be brought to market; and, in order to meet the emergency, the law must be enacted and carried into effect, before, in that day of protracted voyages and slow communications, there would be time to submit it to the eye of majesty. If substantial justice required the adoption of such a measure, and it was really impossible, under the circumstances, to have the royal assent, the Act might well have been regarded, even without such assent, as technically valid; more especially as the mutual prerogatives of the local and imperial governments were far from being accurately settled. At all events, the right, taking into view both law and equity, was by no means so clearly on the side of the clergy as Mr. Wirt represents it; and it is not at all surprising that the champions of the planters, arguing the case as they probably did chiefly on grounds of common sense and substantial justice, were able to make a strong impression upon the minds of the people.

The affair was brought before the king in council; and that body, sustaining naturally enough the construction of the law, and favorable to the royal prerogative, declared the Act of 1758 null and void for want of the royal assent. Finding themselves supported in their pretensions by this high authority, the clergy undertook to enforce them by legal process, and commenced a number of suits for the recovery of their salaries in tobacco, of which that institution by Maury was one. Another of the same kind was commenced in the same county by the Rev. Patrick Henry, who has already been mentioned as the orator's uncle. The fact that Henry was not employed by his uncle in this interesting cause is a strong proof that little was yet expected, even by those who knew him best, and felt the deepest interest in his welfare, from his future efforts in his new profession.

The plaintiff, in this case of Maury, as I have remarked before, founded his claim on the statute of 1748. The defendant pleaded specially that of 1758; and to this plea the plaintiff demurred; or, in other words, replied that this Act could not operate, in law, to set aside the plaintiff's claim; first, because it had not received the royal assent, and, secondly, because it had been declared null and void by the king in council. The legal question was argued at the November term of the year 1763, by Mr. Lyons for the plaintiff, and Mr. John Lewis for the defendants, when the court, "very much," says Mr. Wirt, "to the credit of their candor and firmness, breasted the popular current by sustaining the demurrer."

The clergy, having obtained a decision of the court in their favor, on the only objection that had been raised by the planters, naturally considered their cause as gained. It only remained for a jury to give the damages; but this was regarded as a merely formal proceeding, because the amount was supposed to be settled by the statute of 1748. The action was continued for this purpose; but the counsel for the defendants, Mr. Lewis, viewing the only point of importance as settled, and his services as no longer necessary, retired from the case. It was at this stage in the progress of the affair, and in consequence of the retirement of Mr. Lewis, that Patrick Henry was retained by the defendants. Probably the case was now supposed to have been brought within so narrow a compass that it might be safely intrusted to a junior member of the bar hitherto unknown to the public.

Whatever may have been the views of the defendants in retaining him, Henry, on being applied to, consented to take charge of the affair, and to argue the question of damages before the jury. The case came on for trial on the 1st of December, 1763, before the county court, in which the father of Henry sat as presiding magistrate. The position of the young barrister was, in fact, a rather singular one. He was to speak for the first time in open court before his own father as presiding magistrate, in a case in which the court had already given a deliberate opinion in favor of the other party, and in which his uncle was interested against him.

The excitement on the subject was so great



throughout the colony that, even at this late period in the proceedings, a large audience attended, not only from Hanover, but from the neighboring counties. The clergy, in particular, appeared in great force, and among them came the orator's uncle. On seeing him approach, Henry walked up to him, in company with Colonel Meredith, and expressed his regret at seeing his uncle there. "Why so?" inquired the uncle. "Because," replied Henry, "I fear that, as I have never yet spoken in public, I shall be too much overawed by your presence to do justice to my clients. Besides," he added, "I shall be under the necessity of saying some *hard things* of the clergy, which it may be unpleasant to you to hear." His uncle now censured him for having undertaken the case on the side of the planters, which Henry excused by saying that he had had no offer from the clergy; and that, independently of this, his own heart and judgment were on the side of the people. He then requested his uncle to leave the ground. "Why, Patrick," said the old gentleman, with a good-natured smile, "as to *your* saying hard things of the clergy, I advise you to be cautious, as you will be more likely to injure your own cause than theirs. As to my leaving the ground, I fear, my boy, that, with such a case to defend, my presence will do you but little harm or good. Since, however, you seem to think otherwise, and desire it of me so earnestly, you shall be gratified." He then entered his carriage again and returned home.

This little anecdote, which I have given nearly in the words of Mr. Wirt, is equally creditable to both



parties, and affords a pleasing proof of the mutual good-feeling, which, under somewhat trying circumstances, was maintained among the different members of the family. It is impossible to do full justice to the scene that followed without quoting the description of it in the language of the eloquent biographer.

“Soon after the opening of the court, the cause was called. It stood on a writ of inquiry of damages, no plea having been entered by the defendants since the judgment on the demurrer. The array before Mr. Henry’s eyes was now most fearful. On the bench sat more than twenty clergymen, the most learned men in the colony, and the most capable, as well as the severest critics before whom it was possible for him to have made his *début*. The court-house was crowded with an overwhelming multitude, and surrounded with an immense and anxious throng, which, not finding room to enter, was endeavoring to listen without in the deepest attention. But there was something still more awfully disconcerting than all this; for in the chair of the presiding magistrate sat no other person than his own father. Mr. Lyons opened the case very briefly. In the way of argument he did nothing more than explain to the jury that the decision upon the demurrer had put the Act of 1758 entirely out of the way, and left the law of 1748 as the only standard of damages. He then concluded with a highly-wrought eulogium on the benevolence of the clergy.

“And now came on the first trial of Patrick Henry’s strength. No one had ever heard him speak,

and curiosity was on tiptoe. He rose very awkwardly, and faltered much in his exordium. The people hung their heads at so unpromising a commencement; the clergy were observed to exchange sly looks with each other, and his father is described as having almost sunk with confusion from his seat. But these feelings were of short duration, and soon gave place to others of a different character. For now were those wonderful faculties which he possessed, for the first time developed, and now was first witnessed that mysterious and almost supernatural transformation of appearance which the fire of his own eloquence never failed to work in him. For, as his mind rolled along, and began to glow from its own action, all the *exuvia* of the clown seemed to shed themselves spontaneously. His attitude, by degrees, became erect and lofty. The spirit of his genius awakened all his features. His countenance shone with a nobleness and grandeur which it had never before exhibited. There was a lightning in his eyes that seemed to rivet the spectator. His action became graceful, bold, and commanding; and in the tones of his voice, but more especially in his emphasis, there was a peculiar charm, a magic, of which any one who ever heard him will speak as soon as he is named, but of which no one can give any adequate description. They can only say that it struck upon the ear and upon the heart, *in a manner which language cannot relate*. Add to all these his wonder-working fancy, and the peculiar phraseology in which he clothed his images; for he painted to the heart with a force that almost petrified it. In the

language of those who heard him on this occasion, 'he made their blood run cold and their hair to rise on end.'

"It will not be difficult for any one who ever heard this most extraordinary man to believe the whole account of this transaction, which is given by his surviving hearers; and from their account the court-house at Hanover must have exhibited, on this occasion, a scene as picturesque as has ever been witnessed in real life. They say that the people, whose countenances had fallen as he arose, had heard but a very few sentences before they began to look up; then to look at each other with surprise, as if doubting the evidence of their own senses; then, attracted by some strong gesture, struck by some majestic attitude, fascinated by the spell of his eye, the charm of his emphasis, and the varied and commanding expression of his countenance, they could look away no more. In less than twenty minutes they might be seen in every part of the house, on every bench, in every window, stooping forward from their stands, in death-like silence; their features fixed in amazement and awe; all their senses listening and riveted upon the speaker, as if to catch the last strain of some heavenly visitant. The mockery of the clergy was soon turned into alarm; their triumph into confusion and despair; and, at one burst of his rapid and overwhelming invective, *they fled from the bench in precipitation and terror*. As for the father, such was his surprise, such his amazement, such his rapture, that, forgetting where he was, and the character which he was filling, tears of ecstasy streamed

down his cheeks, without the power or inclination to repress them.

“The jury seem to have been so completely bewildered that they lost sight not only of the Act of 1748, but of that of 1758 also; for, thoughtless even of the admitted right of the plaintiff, they had scarcely left the bar when they returned with a verdict of *one penny damages*. A motion was made for a new trial; but the court, too, had now lost the equipoise of their judgment, and overruled the motion by a unanimous vote. The verdict and judgment overruling the motion were followed by redoubled acclamations from within and without the house. The people, who had with difficulty kept their hands off their champion, from the moment of his closing his harangue, no sooner saw the fate of the cause finally sealed, than they seized him at the bar, and, in spite of his own exertions and the continued cry of ‘Order,’ from the sheriff and the court, they bore him out of the court-house, and, raising him on their shoulders, carried him about the yard in a kind of electioneering triumph.”

His father is represented as having been so much overwhelmed as to lose, for the time, the power of expressing his feelings. A few days after, in conversation with his brother-in-law, Judge Winston, he alluded to the scene in the following simple terms, which contrast rather singularly with the gorgeous phraseology of Mr. Wirt. “Patrick spoke in this cause near an hour, and in a manner that surprised me. He showed himself well-informed upon a subject of which I did not think he had any knowledge.”

“I have tried much,” continues Mr. Wirt, “to procure a sketch of this celebrated speech. But those of Mr. Henry’s hearers who survive seem to have been bereft of their senses. They can only tell you, in general, that they were taken captive, and were so delighted with their captivity that they followed implicitly whithersoever he led them; that, at his bidding, their tears flowed from pity and their cheeks flushed with indignation; that, when it was over, they felt as if they had just awakened from some ecstatic dream, of which they were unable to recall or connect the particulars. It was such a speech as they believe had never before fallen from the lips of man; and, to this day, the old people of that county cannot conceive that a higher compliment can be paid to a speaker than to say of him, in their own homely phrase, ‘He is almost equal to Patrick, when he pleaded against the parsons.’”

In this account of the character and effect of Henry’s argument there is obviously a large mixture of the poetical element, carried, in fact, rather beyond the limits of good-taste in the forms of expression. The main facts are, however, of such a kind that they cannot well have been fabricated or misrepresented. The verdict of the jury and the opinions of the court are matters of record; the eager attention of the audience during the argument, and the popular triumph at the close, are quite in accordance with the general character of the scene. The only statement of fact that wears a rather doubtful appearance is “the flight of the clergy in precipitation and terror from the bench.” Whatever disgust

or indignation may have been excited in their minds by the invectives of Henry, there was no reason to apprehend any danger to their personal safety.

The fact, probably, was that one or more, possibly the whole body of the clergy, on ascertaining the line of argument which he intended to pursue retired from the bench, not in terror, but from unwillingness to listen to a furious attack on their own Order. The irregularity of the proceeding does not seem to have been quite so great as Mr. Wirt represents it. He says that the subject of the Act of 1758, and the order of council respecting it, had been disposed of at the preceding term, and that, strictly speaking, neither Henry nor the jury had anything to do with this part of the case; that the jury, in giving merely nominal damages, had lost sight, not only of the Act of 1758, but of that of 1748, and of the admitted right of the plaintiff; and that the court, in overruling the motion for a new trial, showed that "they had lost the equipoise of their judgment." He can only account for such proceedings in part by the supposed laxity of the county court practice, and in part by the overwhelming effect of Henry's eloquence.

In reality, however, although the court had decided at the preceding term that the demurrer was good in law, it remained for the jury to settle, as a question of fact, the amount of damage actually suffered. Supposing the law to be with the clergy, substantial justice might still be on the other side; and in that case the damage sustained by the clergy was of the kind described in the books as *damnum absque injuria* (damage without injury). In such a case, a

verdict of nominal damages is obviously the proper one, the precise object of such a verdict being to recognize the existence of a legal right on one side, and an equitable one on the other ; nor does it appear that the court had any sufficient motive for granting a new trial. The law question had been decided at the preceding term, agreeably to the views of the party making the motion, and, of course, did not require to be reconsidered. The verdict of the jury, whether right or wrong, was within the form of law, and was liable to no exception which would justify an application for a new trial.

The case, as I have remarked before, was a good deal stronger against the clergy than Mr. Wirt is inclined to represent it, and seems, on the whole, to have been disposed of, at every stage of the proceedings, in a manner very creditable to the firmness and independence of the parties to which it was successively submitted. The court, composed probably for the most part of planters, evinced a laudable disinterestedness in deciding the demurrer against themselves, and in favor of the clergy. The jury exhibited both intelligence and independence in taking the course which enabled them to reconcile substantial justice with the form of law ; and the court, in overruling the motion for a new trial, only carried into effect the common rules of proceeding.

It is highly probable that the eloquence of Henry operated powerfully on the minds of the court and jury, as well as on those of the audience ; but it is certain that its effect must have been greatly heightened by the strong sympathy that prevailed through-



out the community with the party which he supported, and the universal disposition of his hearers to receive with favor everything that he might say. Without intending any disparagement to his talents, we may perhaps conclude with safety that the strong excitement which existed in regard to the question at issue furnishes the true key to the more extravagant, and otherwise almost incredible, incidents that marked the proceedings in the trial of the Parsons' Cause. While it was in Henry a strong proof of real power, that, on appearing for the first time as an advocate, he was able to meet the exigencies of such a scene, it was also an instance of good-fortune to have been called upon to make his *début* in a case in which he necessarily carried with him the full current of popular feeling, and thus to enter, under the most favorable auspices, upon his professional career. Without adverting to the extraordinary interest felt at the time in this case, it would be difficult to account for the fact that, in the long course of his subsequent efforts in so many different fields, he never seems to have surpassed, if, indeed, he ever quite equalled, the impression which he made upon this occasion, and that the argument in the Parsons' Cause is still cited as the *ne plus ultra* of his unrivalled eloquence.

Of the topics treated in this celebrated speech, the only one of which any account has been preserved, is that of the validity of the Act of 1758, and of the proceedings respecting it by the king in council. Henry is represented by Mr. Wirt, on the authority, as I understand him, of oral tradition, as having



maintained that government was in the nature of a compact between the king and the people; that the king, on failing to secure his subjects in Virginia against the results of a short crop of tobacco, had violated this compact, and thereby discharged the other party from the duty of executing it; and that the people had provided for their own safety by the Act of 1758, the validity of which was in no way affected by the declaration of its nullity from the king in council. This is not, perhaps, the strongest form in which the argument on this topic could have been presented for the purpose which Henry had in view. It is not improbable that his reasoning may have been somewhat misrepresented in passing through the mouths of oral reporters. The object of Henry was to obtain a verdict of nominal damages, by showing that, wherever the legal right might be, substantial justice was on the side of the planters. In this purpose it was not necessary to argue that the king was bound by the social compact to secure the Virginia planters against the results of a short crop of tobacco, which he could not well be expected to do, or that the order in council, annulling the Act of 1758, had no legal validity. The natural course of the argument would be that the clergy had no claim in justice to triple their salaries at the expense of the planters, in consequence of an accidental rise in the value of a particular article; that, in founding such a claim upon a circumstance which was in itself in the nature of a public calamity, the clergy acted inconsistently with their professional character; that the legislature, in securing the planters by law

against such a pretension, proceeded in accordance with the dictates of natural justice; that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was physically impossible to obtain the king's assent to the law, and that the legislature were consequently justified by necessity in proceeding without it; and that the subsequent declaration of the council, however it might affect the validity of the law, could not affect the equity of the case, nor consequently impair the right of the plaintiff to a verdict of merely nominal damages. This is the argument which would naturally have been suggested by the aspect under which the case was presented. It is tenable in all its points, and only required to be stated with power and eloquence, in order to carry conviction to the mind of every hearer. The development of it would naturally include a course of severe animadversion on the conduct of the clergy, in seeking to fatten on the public distress; but it would not have been necessary to insist on any views of the law inconsistent with those which had already been taken by the court. It may therefore be presumed that it is the outline of the argument adopted by Henry.

Such is the history of the famous Parsons' Cause, The clergy took no step in carrying the matter before a higher tribunal. Mr. Camm published another pamphlet, in which the *obscure advocate* of the planters, and the court in which the cause had been tried, were treated with great contempt. But the interest that had been for some time felt in this affair was immediately forgotten, under the stronger excitement produced by the opening scenes of the Rev-

olutionary contest, and left no results of consequence, excepting that of having brought before the public view, under the most favorable auspices, at this critical period, an individual better fitted perhaps by character and talents than any other in the colony, to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm.

Henry was at once retained for the planters in all the cases then in court depending on the same principles with that of Mr. Maury; but they were all withdrawn by the clergy and never came to trial. His business increased considerably, but was still for some time hardly adequate to his support; and, for the purpose of obtaining a wider field for his operations he removed to the county of Louisa, where he resided at a place called the *Roundabout*. Here he resumed, in connection with his professional occupations, his favorite rural sports, and has been known to hunt the deer for several days together, carrying his provision with him, and at night encamping in the woods. After the hunt was over, he would go from the ground to the Louisa court-house in his hunting apparel, take up the first of his causes that happened to be called, and, if it afforded any scope for display, astonish the court and jury by the effusions of his natural eloquence. His power of enchaining the attention of his hearers is strikingly shown by a remark of Judge Lyons, the same person who had argued the Parsons' Cause against him, and who has been heard to say that, while practicing at the bar, he could always write a letter, or draft a legal paper, in court with as much freedom of mind as in his own office, under all circumstances, except-

ing when *Patrick* rose to speak; but that, whenever this happened, however trifling might be the matter in question, he was obliged to throw aside his pen and could not write a word until the speech was finished.

In the autumn of 1764, about a year after his argument in the Parsons' Cause, Henry was employed to appear before a committee of the House of Burgesses, in a case of a contested election, and acquitted himself with great distinction. But the moment had now arrived when he was himself to take his seat in the assembly, and for a time to govern its proceedings on the mighty questions in regard to which the Colonies were at issue with the mother country.

### CHAPTER III

Elected a Member of the House of Burgesses.—Brings forward his celebrated Resolutions on the Stamp Act.

THE year in which Patrick Henry argued the Parsons' Cause was distinguished by an event of high importance to the concerns of this continent, and ultimately, through them, of the whole Christian world. In that year were signed at Paris, by the representatives of the principal European powers, the definitive treaties which brought to a close the War of 1756, commonly called, in this country, the *Old French War*. By these treaties, France, then in the hands of the corrupt and imbecile administration which governed in the name of Louis the Fifteenth, threw from her, as if in wantonness, the vast territory which she had previously possessed on this continent, and which, properly administered, might have secured to her the dominion of the whole. Canada was ceded to Great Britain. Louisiana, comprehending, as claimed by France, the entire valley of the Mississippi from the mouth of that river to its sources, and from the Alleghany to the Rocky Mountains, perhaps, on the whole, the richest and most favored region of equal extent on the face of the globe, was given away, as it seems, without any motive whatever, to Spain. By the same treaties, Florida was ceded by Spain to England.

It was doubtless supposed, at the time, that these arrangements had consolidated and established forever the dominion of Great Britain over the whole western continent. Occupying the coast from Davis's Straits to Cape Florida, relieved from the dangerous neighborhood of the French, who had hitherto in some degree kept them in check, and with nothing to oppose their farther progress but a torpid Spanish government at New Orleans, it was naturally supposed that the Colonies would regularly and eagerly push forward their settlements into the interior, until they had driven the Spaniards from the continent; in short, that they would run, as British subjects, the same career, which they have, in fact, pursued as citizens of the United States.

This was the superficial aspect of the case; but a keener foresight into the future might, perhaps, even then have satisfied the observer that the result of these arrangements would be of a directly opposite character, and would tend to weaken and dismember, rather than consolidate and strengthen, the British power. The neighborhood of the French was the principal circumstance that counteracted this tendency to independence, which naturally grew out of the remote situation of the British colonies, and their peculiar habits of thought and feeling. At the occurrence of every new war in Europe, the British settlements in America were exposed to new inroads from the interior, aggravated in their effects by all the horrors of savage warfare. The necessity of obtaining the aid of the mother country in repelling these attacks, and the sympathy generated by the

concert of action thus produced, created for the time a community of feeling which could never have been produced in any other way. The acquisition of Canada removed this check to the spirit of independence; and it might, perhaps, have been anticipated that this spirit would now develop itself with greater assurance and freedom than before. But even in this view of the subject no contemporary observer would ever have predicted the rapidity with which the new combination of circumstances produced its effects. At no period in the history of the Colonies had the feeling on their part towards the mother country been so cordial as it was at the conclusion of the Peace of 1763. Twelve years afterwards, the mother country and the Colonies were at open war; in thirteen, the colonies had declared Independence; and in twenty, the representatives of the same powers that made the arrangements of 1763, signed, at Paris, another set of treaties, the principal result of which was to recognize the national existence of the United States. So rapid, in some cases at least, is the progress of the revolutions which determine the fortunes of nations and change the face of the world.

The event which immediately brought on this new and wholly unexpected series of occurrences took place in England in the year following the Peace, and was one of its results. Desiring to make the reductions in the taxes that are usual after the close of a long war, and finding it necessary at the same time to provide for the interest of a large war-debt, the British ministry, in order to combine the two



objects as far as possible, began to look about for new sources of revenue, and conceived the idea of raising funds by taxing the Colonies. In pursuance of this project, on the 10th of March, 1764, a declaratory resolution was adopted in Parliament, to the effect that it "would be proper to impose certain stamp duties on the Colonies and Plantations, for the purpose of raising an American revenue, payable into the British exchequer." At the next session of Parliament, in the year 1765, a law was passed, in conformity with this resolution, commonly called the Stamp Act.

The resolution and the Act, though adopted by large majorities, were opposed in Parliament by a respectable minority, chiefly on the ground of constitutional law. The right of the government to raise money from the people by taxation was declared to be coëxtensive with, and incidental to, the right of the people to be represented in Parliament. As the Colonies were not represented in Parliament, they could not rightfully be taxed. The correctness of this principle, even in its application to the mother country, may perhaps be regarded as somewhat questionable. With the inhabitants of the British islands the right of being directly represented in Parliament is far from being, or having been at any time, coëxtensive with the duty of paying taxes; and the idea of virtual representation, it was supposed, might as well be applied to the population of the Colonies, as to the unrepresented part of that of the mother country.

It may be urged, indeed, with some degree of



plausibility, that, where the legislator is himself subject to his own laws, there is less danger of oppression than where they are made applicable only to a distant country. But this is a consideration of equity and expediency, rather than of strict right. In reality, the constitutional rights of British subjects, which at home depended on usage rather than strict definition, became, in the anomalous circumstances under which the Colonies were settled, so entirely matters of inference and construction that they must necessarily have been interpreted differently, and with almost equal degrees of plausibility, by the Colonies and the Government. It was the true policy of the government to avoid everything that would provoke discussion on the subject, since, whatever the merits of the case might be, any agitation of the question would necessarily stimulate the existing tendency to Independence. The error of the British ministry lay in assuming a principle, which, whether in itself true or false, could not fail at all events to provoke a controversy, and in not retracing their steps with sufficient firmness, when they saw how the Act was received in America.

Starting from the period of the Peace of 1763, when the feeling of cordiality toward the mother country was strong and universal, had the British ministry pursued uniformly a conciliatory course, never advancing any pretension which was fitted to alarm the jealousy of the Colonies, encouraging, instead of crushing, their home industry, governing them, in short, not with a view to the separate aggrandizement of Great Britain, but to the interest of

the Colonies themselves, and that of the mother country only as therein involved and implied; had the ministry taken such a course, the union with Great Britain might have lasted for an indefinite period, perhaps for centuries, and until the superior population and revenues of the Colonies should have transferred the seat of the common government, by a natural process, to this side of the Atlantic. But such results would have been hardly consistent with the ordinary course of events. With the feelings on both sides that naturally grew out of their respective positions, it was much more natural that the British government should adopt some such measure as the Stamp Act, and that its adoption should be followed by resistance from the Colonies.

But although opposition, more or less energetic, was naturally to be expected, and was doubtless calculated on by the ministers, it is hardly probable that they anticipated the storm of resistance which burst upon them at once from all quarters of the continent. The declaratory resolution was met by remonstrances and protests from the Colonial legislatures, transmitted through their agents at London, in which they denied entirely the right of the Government to raise a revenue from the Colonies. Shaken in some degree by their proceedings, the ministry intimated to the agents that they had no particular predilection for the proposed method of raising the money wanted, and that they would abandon the idea of laying Stamp duties if the agents would suggest any other mode of obtaining the amount which these duties were expected to yield,

and which was only a hundred thousand pounds. So trifling was the pecuniary interest actually at stake in the quarrel, which was destined to dismember the British empire. The agents rejected these overtures, and insisted firmly on the constitutional right of British subjects not to be taxed excepting with their own consent through their representatives.

Failing in these attempts at conciliation, the ministry adhered to their original plan. Soon after the opening of Parliament, in January, 1765, they carried through the two Houses, by unanimous consent, a resolution not to receive any memorials which denied the right of the Government to tax the Colonies; and soon after proposed, and carried by large majorities, the famous Stamp Act. On the actual passage of this obnoxious law, the feeling of discontent which had been kept in some degree within bounds, by the hope that Parliament would refrain from following out the course indicated by the resolution of the preceding session, now burst forth with uncontrollable fury. On the arrival of the intelligence of the passage of the law at Boston, the ships in port displayed their flags at half-mast as signals of distress; the bells were muffled and tolled as at a funeral. The Act was publicly burned. The shipmasters who had brought out the stamps were compelled to give them up, and they were immediately destroyed, so that, on the 1st of November, when the Act went into operation, there was not one to be found in the Colonies.

The merchants entered into mutual compacts not to import any goods from Great Britain while the

law remained in force. As the use of stamped paper was rendered necessary by the Act in almost all matters of business, public or private, the destruction of the supply which had been transmitted interrupted the progress of all current affairs. The courts of justice were closed, and the people were left at full leisure to devote their whole time and attention to the all-absorbing subject. The rapidity with which the feeling that prevailed through the Colonies changed, in a single year, from unprecedented cordiality to unmitigated abhorrence, is almost miraculous. It evinces a keen sensibility to any interference with their real or supposed political rights, and a resolute determination to maintain them, singularly characteristic of the race from which they sprang, but which had never, perhaps, been displayed with greater energy at the most trying periods in the history of the mother country.

The legislature of Virginia, immediately after receiving intelligence of the adoption of the declaratory resolution by Parliament, prepared addresses, directed severally to the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, in which they remonstrated with spirit and decision, but still in a tone of moderation, against any actual legislation on this basis. These addresses corresponded in character with the feeling which prevailed in the Colonies at the time of their adoption, and which was still friendly and loyal towards the mother country, although in some degree altered by the prospect of the measures that were threatened. The actual passage of the Stamp Act seems to have obliterated entirely the

remains of the previously existing sentiment, and to have substituted in its place the most intense excitement, and a resolute determination to resist to the utmost, and at all hazards, the ministerial pretensions. The boldest and most energetic patriots were naturally called into action by the nature of the crisis.

In Virginia, the friends of liberty fixed their eyes immediately upon the young advocate who had recently acquired so much reputation by his brilliant eloquence and undaunted defence of Colonial rights against the encroachments of the Crown, at the regular election of members of the House of Burgesses for the year 1765. Henry does not seem to have been thought of as a candidate; but, after the adoption of the Stamp Act was known, Mr. William Johnson, the member elect for the county of Louisa, accepted the place of coroner in order to create a vacancy. A writ was issued on the 1st of May for a new election, and before the 20th it appears that Henry had taken his seat in the Assembly, which was in session at the time, as on that day he was added to the committee for courts of justice. On making his appearance in the Assembly, he exhibited the same plain and rather uncouth exterior which had previously distinguished him. It now formed a rather striking contrast with the stately deportment and finished elegance of manner which characterized the leading members of the landed aristocracy of Virginia.

It was probably not anticipated by the friends of Henry that he would lead the proceedings of the Assembly on the Stamp Act. Richard Henry Lee,

Pendleton, Wythe, Bland, and others, who afterwards took an active and prominent part in the contest with the mother country, were members of this body, and, from their superiority in years and authority, if not in talent and eloquence, to Henry, were naturally expected to assume the responsibility of pointing out the course to be pursued. Henry, as a young and powerful advocate, was calculated on to sustain and recommend to the people the measures proposed by the leaders. These very natural expectations were, as we shall presently see, entirely disappointed.

The first affair in which Henry took a part was far from exhibiting any very strong tendency in him to follow the lead of the landed aristocracy. Although it had no immediate connection with the exciting political topics of the day, it was in itself of an interesting character, and, in more quiet times, would have probably absorbed for some years the attention of the Colony. It was a proposal made in the Assembly to convert the State treasury into a sort of land bank, by authorizing the treasurer to lend the public money to individuals on good landed security. Whether these loans were to be made in a paper money, resting on the public faith, to be created for the purpose, or in the usual currency of the Colony, is not stated in the accounts that have come down to us of this transaction.

The treasurer of the Colony at this period was John Robinson, who was also at the same time, and had been for five and twenty years preceding, the speaker of the Assembly. He was a person of large

property and excellent character, by general acknowledgment the leader of the landed interest. Profuse in his expenditures, and liberal in his disposition, he had been in the habit of lending money very freely to such persons as wished to borrow, employing indiscriminately for this purpose his own funds and those of the State. By a long perseverance in this system his affairs had become confused, and he began to apprehend that he should find himself unable to meet his payments on public account. The real object of the proposed measure was to enable him to settle his affairs, by transferring the loans which he had made on his own responsibility, though with the public money, to the credit of the State. As the irregularity of the manner in which Robinson had managed the affairs of the treasury was not known until after his death, which took place a year later, the real object of the proposed measure was not at the time suspected by the public. The plan seems to have been favored by the leading members of the Assembly, who naturally anticipated that the loans to be made would fall, in part at least, into their hands.

It was in opposition to this plan that Henry made his first speech in the House of Burgesses. The ultimate object not being known, he could, of course, attack it only on the general ground of objections, which are sufficiently obvious; such as the danger, inconvenience, and radical impropriety of employing the public money in private banking operations, and the abuses to which such a system would necessarily lead. No report is extant of this speech. Mr. Jeffer-



son, who heard the debate, speaks of it as an effort of great ability, and quotes a single remark which made at the time a very strong impression on himself and the House. It had been urged by the friends of the measure that certain persons of substantial property had been led by circumstances to contract debts, which, if exacted immediately, would bring ruin upon them and their families, but that, with a little indulgence in point of time, these debts might be paid with ease, and that this project would furnish the persons so situated with the accommodation which they wanted. "What, Sir," said Henry, in commenting upon this remark, which seems to have been a covert allusion to the case of Robinson himself; "What, Sir, is it proposed, then, to reclaim the spendthrift from his dissipation and extravagance by filling his pockets with money?" "These expressions," says Jefferson, in his letter to Wirt, "are indelibly impressed upon my memory." As the remark here quoted, though just and pointed, has nothing particularly striking or brilliant about it, it is easy to judge how much the effect of Henry's speeches, as is the case, indeed, with those of every celebrated orator, must have depended on the manner in which they were delivered. The opposition of Henry to the projected plan was successful. He carried with him all the members of the upper country, who constituted a considerable majority over the aristocracy of the lower country.

The next year Robinson died, and the disclosure of the deficit in his accounts with the State, which exhibited the true character of this proposal, fully

justifies the opposition of Henry, and reflected honor on his foresight and sagacity. He assumed at this time the position, which he continued to hold through his whole career, of a popular tribune, who made it his business to attempt to secure the rights of the mass of the community against invasion by the wealthy and powerful. This might not have been, in ordinary times, a course very well fitted to secure to him the highest emoluments and advantages held out by his profession, as it naturally rendered him obnoxious to the landed proprietors, who owned most of the property, and disposed of all the patronage of the Crown in the Colony. But, under the peculiar circumstances of the crisis, it proved perhaps more favorable to his influence than any other that he could have adopted. The progress of events very soon transferred the patronage of the Colony from the hands of the aristocracy to those of the popular leaders, and compelled the former not merely not to oppose Henry, but to march, though not with a very good-will, under his banner. This result was seen in the proceedings of the Assembly at this session upon the Stamp Act.

The leading men appear to have made up their minds, that it was unnecessary to add anything at this session to the addresses which had been adopted at the preceding one, and, up to the third day before the session was to terminate, had shown no intention to propose any new measure. It was at this period that Henry introduced his celebrated resolutions. At some subsequent time, he made himself a statement in writing of the circumstances under which

they were offered. The document is the more curious, as it is the only source from which our knowledge of one of the resolutions is derived. After the decease of Henry, a parcel was found among his papers, with this superscription: "Enclosed are the resolutions of the Virginia Assembly, in 1765, concerning the Stamp Act. Let my executors open this paper." The parcel contained a copy of the resolutions, with some remarks written upon the back of it, the whole in Henry's handwriting. The resolutions are as follows:

"Resolved, That the first adventurers and settlers of this his Majesty's colony and dominion brought with them, and transmitted to their posterity, and all others, his Majesty's subjects, since inhabiting in this his Majesty's said colony, all the privileges, franchises, and immunities, that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain.

"Resolved, That, by two royal charters, granted by King James the First, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all the privileges, liberties, and immunities of denizens and natural-born subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

"Resolved, That the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, and the easiest mode of raising them, and are equally affected by such taxes themselves, is the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, and without which the ancient constitution cannot subsist.

“ Resolved, That his Majesty’s liege people of this most ancient colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the right of being thus governed by their own Assembly, in the article of their taxes and internal police; and that the same hath never been forfeited, or in any other way given up, but hath been constantly recognized by the king and people of Great Britain.

“ Resolved, therefore, That the General Assembly of this colony have the sole right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British, as well as American, freedom.”

The endorsement, also in Henry’s handwriting, on the paper containing these resolutions, is as follows:

“ The within resolutions passed the House of Burgesses in May, 1765. They formed the first opposition to the Stamp Act, and the scheme of taxing America by the British Parliament. All the Colonies, either through fear or want of opportunity to form an opposition, or from influences of some kind or other, had remained silent. I had been, for the first time, elected a burgess a few days before; was young, inexperienced, unacquainted with the forms of the House and the members that composed it. Finding the men of weight averse to opposition, and the commencement of the tax at hand, and that no person was likely to step forth, I determined to venture; and, alone, unadvised, on a blank leaf of an

old law book wrote the within. Upon offering them to the House, violent debates ensued. Many threats were uttered, and much abuse cast on me by the party for submission. After a long and warm contest, the resolutions passed by a very small majority, perhaps of one or two only. The alarm spread throughout America with astonishing quickness, and the ministerial party were overwhelmed. The great point of resistance to British taxation was universally established in the Colonies. This brought on the war, which finally separated the two countries, and gave Independence to ours. Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse, will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed upon us. If they are wise, they will be great and happy. If they are of a contrary character, they will be miserable. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a nation.

“Reader! whoever thou art, remember this; and, in thy sphere, practice virtue thyself, and encourage it in others.  
P. HENRY.”

Such is the account, given by Henry himself, of the passage of these resolutions. It is known, also, from himself, through the channel of his brother-in-law, Judge Winston, that, before they were offered, they were shown to two persons only, John Fleming and George Johnston, members respectively for the counties of Cumberland and Fairfax, by the latter of whom they were seconded. They were opposed with great earnestness by the prominent members who generally led the proceedings, and, on most occasions, as a matter of course, commanded a majority.

The reader will naturally desire to see the account of the proceedings, as given in the graphic and spirited language of Jefferson, who was present at the debate.

“Mr. Henry moved, and Mr. Johnston seconded, these resolutions, successively. They were opposed by Messrs. Randolph, Bland, Pendleton, Wythe, and all the old members, whose influence in the House had till then been unbroken. They did it, not from any question of our rights, but on the ground that the same sentiments had been at the preceding session expressed in a more conciliatory form, to which the answers were not yet received. But torrents of sublime eloquence from Henry, backed by the solid reasoning of Johnston, prevailed. The last, however, and strongest resolution, was carried but by a single vote. The debate on it was most bloody. I was then but a student, and stood at the door of communication between the house and the lobby, (for as yet there was no gallery,) during the whole debate and vote; and I well remember that, after the numbers on the division were told and declared from the chair, Peyton Randolph, the attorney-general, came out at the door where I was standing, and said, as he entered the lobby, ‘I would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote;’ for one vote would have divided the house, and Robinson was in the chair, who, he knew, would have negatived the resolution.

“Mr. Henry left town that evening; and the next morning, before the meeting of the House, Colonel Peter Randolph, then of the council, came to the hall of burgesses and sat at the clerk’s table till the house

bell rang, thumbing over the volumes of journals to find a precedent for expunging a vote of the House, which, he said, had taken place while he was a member or clerk of the House, I do not recollect which. I stood by him at the end of the table a considerable part of the time, looking on as he turned the leaves; but I do not recollect whether he found the erasure. In the meantime, some of the timid members who had voted for the strongest resolution had become alarmed; and, as soon as the House met, a motion was made and carried to expunge it from the journals. There being, at that day, but one printer, and he entirely under control of the governor, I do not know that this resolution ever appeared in print. I write this from memory; but the impression made on me at the time was such as to fix the facts indelibly in my mind. I suppose the original journal was among those destroyed by the British, or its obliterated face might be appealed to. And here I will state, that Burk's statement of Mr. Henry's consenting to withdraw two resolutions, by way of compromise with his opponents, is entirely erroneous."

Mr. Jefferson's suggestion that the manuscript journal was probably destroyed by the British during the war has been ascertained to be erroneous, as the book disappeared very soon after the close of the session of 1765. There are various errors, besides the one mentioned by Mr. Jefferson, in the account of Burk, and some in that of Marshall, in the first volume of the "Life of Washington." Fortunately, the original note of Henry, and the account of Jefferson, enable us to form a perfectly correct, as well as



singularly clear and distinct, notion of this thrilling scene. Jefferson standing as a listener at the door of the House of Burgesses, and imbibing, from the "torrents of Henry's sublime eloquence," the patriotic inspiration which was destined, only ten years afterwards, to glow in his own draft of the Declaration of Independence, would furnish a noble subject for the historical painter, and one which would open plainly to the eye some of the powerful, but then hidden, springs of the coming Revolution.

Of the speech or speeches made by Henry in this debate there is no satisfactory record. Burk, in his History, gives what purports to be his speech; but it is the mere outline of an argument, resting, probably, on recollection, with the exception of a single passage at the close, the correctness of which is well authenticated, and which contributed greatly at the time, by giving effect and poignancy to the whole speech, to produce the desired result. According to this outline, Henry considered the pretence of the ministry to raise a revenue in this country as conflicting with the Colonial charters, with the rights of the people as British subjects, and with their natural rights as men. At the close, he dwelt upon the danger to which the king himself would be exposed in pursuing his present course. "Cæsar," said he, "had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—" At this moment, the orator paused, as if in doubt how to finish the sentence. The natural termination seemed, of course, to be, that George the Third would come, like them, to a violent end; and the members opposed to Henry imme-

diately raised a loud cry of "Treason, treason," in all parts of the House. Henry, in no way disconcerted, but appearing, on the contrary, to gather new power from the excitement of the scene, assumed a more erect position, and, fastening his eagle eye upon the speaker, the same John Robinson whose corrupt plans he had so signally baffled a few days before, added, in the most appropriate emphasis, as the closing words of the phrase, "may profit by their example." He then paused again, for some seconds, and finally subjoined, as a sort of commentary on the outcry that had just occurred, "If this be treason, make the most of it!"

Such was the first appearance of Henry as an orator on purely political topics; and it is a rather singular circumstance that, in this department, as in that of legal practice, no subsequent effort seems to have surpassed, or even quite equalled, in immediate effect, the first. His speech in the Continental Congress, soon after its organization, called forth the strongest admiration; many of his speeches in the Virginia Convention, on the Federal Constitution, were received with unbounded enthusiasm, and produced very extraordinary results. His argument in the British Debt case, which occupied three days, is analyzed at great length by Mr. Wirt, and dwelt upon as a sort of masterpiece. But, even at the present time, a Virginian, who is requested to mention the leading titles of Henry's glory, appeals without hesitation to the speeches on the Stamp Act and the Parsons' Cause. The peculiar circumstances attending each of these cases may have contributed some-

thing to give them their comparative importance; but, independently of any other cause, there is a certain freshness in the first efforts of a powerful mind, which gives them an advantage over those of later years, that, on careful analysis, may appear, as works of science and art, fully equal, if not superior.

It is remarked by Lord Byron, in one of his private memoranda or letters, that he awoke one morning and found himself famous. Henry had taken his seat in the Assembly, notwithstanding the *éclat* of the Parsons' Cause, a still comparatively obscure country attorney, at best a rising lawyer of great promise. He returned to his home, three or four weeks after, by universal acknowledgment, the first statesman and orator in Virginia.

## CHAPTER IV

Repeal of the Stamp Act.—Henry elected to the Continental Congress.—Speech in the Virginia Convention.

THE unfortunate measure which had produced such a ferment throughout the Colonies, and which exercised so important an influence on their relations with the mother country, was destined itself to be of short duration. Within a year after the passage of the Stamp Act, a change took place in the administration of the British Government. The Grenville Cabinet, in which the Tory influence predominated, was compelled to retire; and a new one was formed, on Whig principles, under the direction of the Marquis of Rockingham. It was on this occasion that Burke, who had previously been private secretary to the marquis, took his seat in Parliament. It may be proper to remark that, although the Grenville administration was ostensibly responsible for the passage of the Stamp Act, Mr. Grenville himself is said to have been individually averse to it, and to have proposed it very unwillingly, in compliance with the positive command of the king, who was the real author of the measure. However this may be, the new ministry, which, as members of Parliament, had opposed the adoption of this policy, very naturally evinced a disposition to recede from it. The speech

from the throne, at the opening of the session, breathed a conciliatory spirit in regard to America; and, in the debate upon it in the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt attacked the policy of the late administration with great power. A bill was introduced, soon after, for the repeal of the Stamp Act, which, though strongly opposed, passed the two Houses by large majorities, and became a law. At the same time, another law was passed, declaratory of the right of Parliament to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever.

This prompt and apparently good-humored retreat from the course which had been so injudiciously entered upon gave entire satisfaction throughout the Colonies, and restored for a moment the cordial feeling towards the mother country that prevailed at the close of the war. Public rejoicings, including expressions of the warmest gratitude to the friends of the Colonies, at home and abroad, took place in all quarters. The Virginia Assembly voted an address of thanks to the King and Parliament, in which they renewed all their former professions of attachment and loyalty. They also resolved to erect a statue of the King, and an obelisk in honor of the British statesmen who had supported the cause of America. A bill was introduced for this purpose; but, in consequence of the less favorable aspect which the affair shortly after assumed in England, it was never acted on.

Had the British Government, at this period, persevered with consistency and good-faith in the policy which apparently dictated the repeal of the Stamp

Act, there can be no doubt that the good feeling produced by that repeal would have been maintained, and would have prevailed for a long time in the relations between the two parties. But this was not the case; and the course actually pursued was one which it would be as difficult to reconcile with any consistent scheme of administration, as well as with a prudent regard to the rights and feelings of the Colonies.

Occasional concessions gave an appearance of weakness and indecision to the action of the ministry, while the extreme severity displayed on other occasions irritated the minds of the Americans almost to frenzy. Not content with annexing to the repeal of the Stamp Act a declaratory law, which was fitted of itself to give an ungracious aspect to the whole proceeding, the ministry seemed to have taken particular pains to disavow any intention for which the Colonies could properly be grateful, and publicly treated with contempt the demonstrations of satisfaction which had, in fact, been shown in America. Townshend, the new chancellor of the exchequer, remarked, in a speech made the following year, in the debate on the supplies, "that he had voted for the repeal of the Stamp Act, not because it was not a good Act, but because there appeared to be a propriety in repealing it. He added, that he repeated the sentiment in order that the galleries might hear him; and that, after this, he did not expect to have his statue erected in America." In accordance with these views, the plan of raising a revenue in the Colonies was immediately revived. A law was

passed, the same year, imposing new duties upon various articles imported into the Colonies, and particularly *tea*; and, in order to show the settled determination of the ministry to persist, at all hazards, in their pretensions, additional troops were sent to America and quartered in the principal northern cities.

This headstrong spirit in the cabinet could not well produce any other results than such as those which followed, and which are familiarly known as a part of the general history of the country. Virginia, though prominent in resistance to the Stamp Act, seems to have been treated with less severity than some of the other Colonies. This is attributed, by Mr. Wirt, to the personal character of the Virginian governors, Fauquier and Botetourt, who are represented as having endeavored to maintain, as far as possible, a good understanding between the parties; while it seems to have been the object of the Bernards and Hutchinsons, of the Eastern States, to envenom existing animosities, and push them as rapidly as possible to extremities. The greater consideration which was extended by the mother country to the Colony of Virginia tended probably to diminish a little, on her side, the activity of opposition.

On the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Assembly, as remarked above, adopted resolutions of a highly loyal character; and it does not appear that any new proceedings took place in reference to the relations with the mother country until the session of 1768-9. On the last day of that session, a series of resolutions



was adopted, asserting in emphatic terms the right of the Colony to be exempt from all taxes excepting such as might be imposed by her own Legislature, and remonstrating vigorously against the recent acts of the British Government. The result of this measure was an immediate dissolution of the House of Assembly by the governor. The members were all reëlected, and returned with augmented ardor to the post of duty. The next step, in the course of resistance to the arbitrary pretensions of the ministry, was the adoption by the Assembly of a series of resolutions, moved by Dabney Carr, and providing for the appointment of a committee of the Legislature to correspond with the Legislatures of the other Colonies. The measure was moved in committee of the whole on the 12th of March, 1773, and was the first movement made in any part of the country towards a concert of action between the Colonies.

Henry had constantly been a member of the House from the time of his first election, and took, no doubt, an active part on both these occasions, although no particular account has been preserved of his course in regard to the resolutions of 1768-9. He supported those of Mr. Carr in a powerful speech, and was appointed a member of the Committee of Correspondence. He seems, at this time, to have become somewhat more studious in regard to the decorum of his external appearance than he had formerly been; and is described by one who was present at the debate on Carr's resolutions as wearing a peach-blossom-colored coat, and dark wig, terminating in a bag, in accordance with the fashion

of that day. He was now in full practice at the bar, and was particularly conspicuous in the defence of criminal cases, where he shone without a rival. In civil actions, involving the technical book learning of the profession, he was still unable to cope on equal terms with the leading barristers, and only recovered his advantage, and displayed his full strength, when the question was of such a nature that he was at liberty to appeal to the great principles of natural justice.

But events of high importance were now succeeding each other with a rapidity which left to those who took an active part in political affairs but little leisure for professional pursuits or private business of any description. The attempt to enforce the new duty on tea was met by the destruction of the first cargo that arrived at Boston, while yet on board the ship in which it came. In retribution for this act of summary justice, the British government withdrew from that town its privileges as a port of entry, by the law commonly called the Boston Port Bill. The situation of Boston under this infliction called forth public expressions of the warmest sympathy from various quarters. The Virginia legislature was in session at the time when intelligence of the enactment of the Boston Port Bill reached this country. The bill was to take effect on the first of June, 1774. The Assembly immediately passed an order setting apart that day to be observed as a season of public fasting, humiliation, and prayer. In consequence of this order, Governor Dunmore on the following day dissolved the House. The members

forthwith repaired to the Raleigh tavern, and, after deliberating on the course which it was proper to pursue under existing circumstances, unanimously adopted an Association, which contained a proposal for the meeting of a General Congress.

In pursuance of these proceedings, delegates were elected shortly after by the several counties, to meet, on the 1st of August following, for the purpose of considering further of the state of public affairs, and particularly of appointing deputies to the General Congress. The delegates accordingly assembled at Williamsburg, at the appointed time, and proceeded to transact the business committed to them. They adopted resolutions, in which they pledged themselves to make common cause with Boston at all hazards, and to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the existing difficulties should be adjusted. As deputies to the General Congress they designated Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton. The president of the Convention, Peyton Randolph, was authorized to call another meeting, if occasion should require.

Notwithstanding the lengths to which the controversy with the mother country had now proceeded, and the bitterness of feeling which had been generated by it, the idea of complete independence was still admitted with reluctance by the greater part of even the more active patriots, and had not become familiar to the people at large. A few persons only, of deeper thought and a keener foresight

into future events than the rest, already perceived that this result was inevitable. Patrick Henry was one of the number, and Mr. Wirt has recorded a very interesting conversation that occurred about this time, in which Henry developed his views, with his characteristic boldness, and with almost prophetic sagacity; the substance of which is here related.

The conversation was held at the house of Colonel Samuel Overton, who, in the presence of several other gentlemen, inquired of Henry whether he supposed that Great Britain would drive her Colonies to extremities; and, if so, what would be the issue of the war. "Sir," said Henry in reply, after looking round the company to see that none but confidential persons were present, "she will drive us to extremities; no accommodation will take place; hostilities will soon commence, and a desperate and bloody contest it will be." "Do you think," continued Overton, "that, destitute as we are of arms, ammunition, ships of war, and money to procure them, we can possibly make any effectual resistance to the forces which Great Britain will send against us?" "To be candid with you," replied Henry, "I doubt whether we should be able to cope single-handed with so formidable an adversary; but," continued he, rising from his seat, with great vivacity, "do you suppose that France, Spain, and Holland, the natural enemies of Great Britain, will look on quietly and see us crushed? Will Louis the Sixteenth be asleep at such a crisis? No, Sir! When he shall be satisfied, by the vigor of our resistance, and by our

*declaration of independence*, that we are in earnest, he will furnish us with supplies, send us fleets and armies to fight our battles for us, and make a treaty, offensive and defensive, with us against our unnatural mother. Spain and Holland will join the alliance; our Independence will be established, and we shall take our place among the nations of the earth."

On the 5th of September, 1774, the deputies to the General Congress met at Carpenter's Hall, in Philadelphia. Peyton Randolph was chosen president. After the formal organization had been completed, the proceedings were opened by a speech from Henry, which was followed by another from Richard Henry Lee. No report of these speeches has been preserved, but they are represented by Mr. Wirt, on the authority of those who heard them, as having been in the highest degree powerful and impressive. Committees were shortly after appointed to prepare a petition to the king, an address to the people of England, and another to the inhabitants of British America. In consequence of their general reputation, as well as of the splendid display of eloquence which they had already made, Henry and Lee were intrusted respectively with the duty of preparing the first and second of these documents. It appeared, however, in the sequel, that the capacity of these gentlemen for literary composition and regular argument was not upon a level with their gifts in speech. The drafts which they reported gave, in both cases, so little satisfaction, that they were recommitted, and others substituted for them, the petition to the king having been drafted by Mr.

Jay, and the address to the people of England by Mr. Dickinson.

Judge Chase, of Maryland, who was a member of this Congress, on hearing the first speeches of Henry and Lee, walked across the floor to the seat of his colleague, and said to him, in an under tone: "We may as well go home; we are not able to legislate with these men." After their talent for transacting the public affairs had been tested, the judge was heard to remark: "I find, after all, they are but men, and, in mere matters of business, but very common men."

No account has been preserved of any further proceedings of Henry in this Congress, which closed its sittings in October. On his return home, Henry was, of course, surrounded by his neighbors, who were eager to learn the particulars of the debates, and inquired, among other things, whom he thought the greatest man in Congress. "If you speak of eloquence," replied Henry, "Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator; but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor." Washington, though still comparatively young, had already developed, in a protracted career of service, his eminent capacity for military affairs and the practical despatch of business; he had been for many years a member of the Assembly, and had exhibited, under all circumstances, and on various trying occasions, the moral elevation of character which was the great secret of his subsequent influence and success.

On the 20th of March, 1775, the Virginia Convention, which had met the preceding year at Williamsburg, came together for the second time at Richmond. Henry was a member of this body. It has already been remarked that the public opinion and feeling throughout the Colonies were not yet prepared for a Declaration of Independence. This was evinced, so far as Virginia was concerned, by the terms of the instructions given by the Williamsburg Convention to their deputies in Congress, which, in connection with a vigorous and plain-spoken statement of grievances, breathe a spirit of loyalty to the king and attachment to the mother country.

A similar tone marked the proceedings of the Congress itself; and, when the Williamsburg Convention met for the second time, the prevailing sentiment among the members was apparently pacific and conciliatory. The first two days were employed in passing resolutions of a merely formal and complimentary character in honor of the deputies to Congress, and of the legislature of Jamaica, which had presented a petition to the king in favor of the claims of the Colonies. These proceedings appeared to Henry altogether too tame for the exigencies of the crisis. He had made up his mind that the time for conciliation was over, and that the controversy had reached the point where there was no other issue but an appeal to actual force. Preparation for the military defence of the Colony was, of course, in this view, the only appropriate measure, and Henry conceived that the activity of the Convention ought to take this direction. He accordingly moved the following resolutions:



“Resolved, That a well-regulated militia, composed of gentlemen and yeomen, is the natural strength and only security of a free government; that such a militia in this Colony would for ever render it unnecessary for the mother country to keep among us, for the purpose of our defence, any standing army of mercenary soldiers, always subversive of the quiet and dangerous to the liberties of the people, and would obviate the pretext of taxing us for their support.

“That the establishment of such a militia is at this time peculiarly necessary, by the state of our laws, for the protection and defence of the country, some of which are already expired, and others will shortly be so; and that the known remissness of government, in calling us together in a legislative capacity, renders it too insecure, in this time of danger and distress, to rely that opportunity will be given of renewing them in General Assembly, or making any provision to secure our inestimable rights and liberties from those further violations with which they are threatened.

“Resolved, therefore, That this Colony be immediately put into a state of defence, and that a committee be raised to prepare a plan for embodying, arming, and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose.”

On this occasion, as in the debate on the Stamp Act, the views of Henry were not only far in advance of the general sentiment of the country, but went beyond those of the most active patriots in the Convention. Bland, Harrison, and Pendleton, who

had been members of Congress, with Robert C. Nicholas, one of the ablest and most respected citizens, resisted with all their might the passage of these resolutions. They urged, in opposition to them, with great eloquence, the more conciliatory temper that had lately been professed by the king and his ministers, the utter hopelessness of a contest with Great Britain, the intimate and endearing character of the ties that had hitherto connected the Colonies with the mother country, and the advantages of various kinds which had accrued to both the parties from the connection.

It is apparent, from the arguments which they employed, that these eminent statesmen and patriots still clung with confidence to the hope of preserving the union. Henry replied to their arguments, and sustained his resolutions in a speech which is given by Mr. Wirt in a report furnished by Judge Tucker, who heard it delivered. This is one of the most powerful specimens that have come down to us of Henry's eloquence. It is inserted here from the report of Judge Tucker, with the substitution of the first for the third person.

"No man can think more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining, as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The ques-

tion before the House is one of awful moment to the country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery. And in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty towards the majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

“Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of Hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

“I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves

and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, Sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed by a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets the armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love, Let us not deceive ourselves, Sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, Sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission, Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, Sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, Sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done to

avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the Ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. *There is no longer any room for hope.* If we wish to be free; if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending; if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained; we must fight! I repeat it, Sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms, and to the God of hosts, is all that is left us.

“They tell us, Sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of

those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, Sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God, who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, Sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, Sir, we have no election (choice). If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery. Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable; and let it come! I repeat it, Sir, let it come!

“It is vain, Sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace; but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but, as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”

This spirited and powerful speech determined the character of the proceedings of the Convention. After another eloquent speech from Richard Henry Lee, in support of the resolutions, a committee, of

which Henry and Washington were among the members, was appointed to prepare and report a plan for the organization of the militia. The report was accordingly made, and the plan adopted; after which, and the transaction of some other business of less importance, the Convention closed its session.



## CHAPTER V

Military Movements.—Henry appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia Forces.—Resigns his Commission.—Elected the first Governor under the new Constitution.

UNDER the present system of conducting political and military affairs in the Christian world, it rarely happens that the same persons, whose opinions in council and eloquence in debate determine the commencement of hostile relations between two countries, are called upon themselves to share the personal hardships and dangers of the conflict. The political leaders who direct the concerns of nations content themselves, in general, with declaring wars and leave it to others to carry them on. It has sometimes been thought that this division of labor has a tendency to render wars more frequent, and that statesmen would be less prompt in urging a resort to arms if the blood which is to flow were to be their own. However this may be, it was pretty soon apparent that Patrick Henry was not one of those persons who are disposed to shrink themselves from the dangers to which they may deem it necessary to expose their countrymen. We have thus far seen him engaged in the various civil employments of cultivator, merchant, lawyer, and statesman. At the next stage in his career, we find him assuming the

character of a military leader, and discharging his duties with a spirit and efficiency which seem to show that, if circumstances of a wholly accidental nature had not checked his progress, his energies would probably have taken this direction and given him as high a rank among the warriors of his country as he has in fact obtained among her orators and statesmen.

When the state of the controversy with the mother country began to render it probable that it would be necessary to resort to arms, the Governors of the several Colonies, either in consequence of instructions from home, or of a concert among themselves, attempted, at about the same time, to get possession of the military stores at all the various points at which they had been collected. On the 20th of April, 1775, the day following the celebrated 19th of April, which was distinguished by the attempt of Governor Gage, in Massachusetts, to seize the military stores at Cambridge and Concord in Massachusetts, a similar proceeding took place in Virginia under the direction of Lord Dunmore. About midnight, Captain Collins, of the armed schooner *Magdalen*, then lying at Burwell's Ferry, on James River, entered the city of Williamsburg, at the head of a body of marines, and carried away from the public magazine about twenty barrels of powder, which he succeeded in getting on board his schooner before day.

The next morning, when the transaction was made known, it created great excitement among the inhabitants, and a considerable number of them mus-

tered in arms for the purpose of compelling Captain Collins to restore the powder. The members of the municipal government with difficulty restrained this tumultuous movement; but afterwards, in their corporate capacity, they addressed a memorial to Lord Dunmore on the subject. The Governor returned a verbal answer, in which he stated, that, having heard of an insurrection in a neighboring county, he had thought it necessary to remove the powder to a place of safety, but assured the petitioners, upon his word of honor, that, whenever it was wanted for any proper purpose, it should be delivered. This assurance, supported by the influence of Peyton Randolph, R. C. Nicholas, and other prominent and popular citizens, restored for a time the public tranquillity.

In the course of the following night, however, a false report was circulated that a body of marines had again landed from the *Magdalen*, at some distance from the city, for the purpose of plunder. The inhabitants again rose in arms, and, by the intervention of the same eminent patriots, were a second time persuaded to lay them aside. The next day, when tranquillity was entirely restored, the Governor sent a message into the city by one of the magistrates, to inform the people that if they offered the least violence to his secretary, Captain Foy, or to Captain Collins, he would set the slaves at liberty and lay the town in ashes. This threat, issued without any apparent necessity, since the two officers whom it was intended to protect had been quietly walking the streets without molestation throughout the whole disturbance, increased the irritation of the inhabi-

tants, which did not, however, at the moment, show itself in any further act of open insurrection.

While the accounts of these proceedings were rapidly circulating throughout the colony, intelligence came on from the east of the events of the 19th of April at Lexington and Concord. The effect was electrical. The volunteer companies which had recently been formed for purposes of discipline, under the direction of Lord Dunmore himself, assembled in arms in every county. By the 27th of April, seven hundred men, well-armed and disciplined, styling themselves friends of constitutional liberty and America, were collected at Fredericksburg, with the intention of marching upon the capital. This movement was checked by an express, received from Peyton Randolph on the 29th of April, stating that the gentlemen of Williamsburg and its neighborhood were satisfied with the result of the seizure of the powder, and advised the volunteers to proceed no farther. On the receipt of this express, a council was held, consisting of a hundred and two persons, officers of companies, or delegates to the provincial Convention, who, after expressing in the strongest terms their opinion of the Governor's proceedings, and their readiness to march at a moment's warning, whenever it might be necessary, in defence of their rights and liberty, recommended to their comrades to return for the present to their homes. They also sent off messengers with advices to the same effect to other meetings of a similar kind which had been called in several other parts of the colony.

In this way the movement was checked for the moment in every county, excepting Hanover, where Henry had again fixed his residence. Far from sharing the solicitude that seems to have been felt by the prominent patriots of Williamsburg to suppress any violent ebullitions of popular feeling, he was rather disposed to encourage them, and avowed to his confidential friends that he considered the seizure of the powder as a fortunate occurrence. Convinced that hostilities were inevitable, he was pleased with any incident which naturally tended to awaken the military spirit of the Colony and induce the people to place themselves at once in a condition for effectual resistance. As soon as he received intelligence of the proceedings at Williamsburg, he immediately summoned the members of the volunteer company of Hanover county to meet him in arms at Newcastle, on the 2d of May, on business of urgent importance. He also called together the county committee at the same time and place.

At this meeting, after a powerful and eloquent address from Henry, on the topics appropriate to the occasion, it was decided to march at once to Williamsburg, and either recover the powder or make reprisals to an equal amount upon the money in the public treasury. Captain Meredith, who commanded the volunteers, resigned his commission, but consented to serve as lieutenant under Henry, who was immediately elected captain, and without delay took up the line of march for Williamsburg. Ensign Goodall, in the meantime, was ordered to cross the country to King William county, which was the

place of residence of the King's Receiver-General, Richard Corbin, and to obtain from him three hundred and thirty pounds, the estimated value of the powder, or take him prisoner. The party reached the house of Mr. Corbin in the night, and surrounded it for the purpose of preventing his escape. The next morning they were assured by the ladies of the family that the Receiver-General was not in the house; and, after satisfying themselves that the statement was correct, they left the place and rejoined Henry, agreeably to their orders, at Doncastle's ordinary, about sixteen miles above Williamsburg.

The movement of Henry created an intense excitement throughout the Colony, and revived at once the military ardor which had been momentarily checked by the moderating influence of the patriots at Williamsburg. The volunteer companies rose again in all quarters and marched across the country to join Henry. It is supposed that not less than five thousand men were on their way to meet him. The royalists were alarmed. The Governor immediately sent his family on board the *Fowey* man-of-war, which was lying in the harbor, and issued a proclamation, in which he denounced the movement as treasonable, and ordered the people to oppose and resist it. Even the prominent patriots inclined, as before, to a pacific course, and despatched several expresses in succession to Henry, for the purpose of persuading him to recede from his design and disband his troops. Henry paid no attention to these remonstrances, but resolutely pursued his march,

until, on arriving at Doncastle's ordinary, he was met by a messenger from the Governor, bringing him a bill of exchange, drawn by the Receiver-General, for the value of the powder.

In the meantime, the marines from the *Fowey* had been landed, and apprehensions were entertained by some that they would make reprisals, for the money thus extorted by Henry, upon the public treasury. Henry, in consequence, addressed a letter to Mr. Nicholas, the treasurer of the Colony, in which he offered, if it should be thought necessary or expedient, to detach from his own troops a guard sufficient for the protection of the treasury. Nicholas declined the offer, and Henry returned with his volunteers to Hanover. Two days after the Governor issued a proclamation denouncing the conduct of "a certain Patrick Henry" as treasonable, and cautioning the people not to give him any aid or countenance. No attempt was, however, made to institute legal proceedings against him or to give him any personal molestation. Immediately after his return, he proceeded to Philadelphia to take his seat in Congress. He was escorted by a numerous cavalcade of his neighbors as far as the Potomac, and was met at every stage on his route by addresses and other demonstrations of the public regard. No accounts are preserved of his action at this session of Congress; and a series of events occurred soon after in Virginia which called for his service in another capacity, and withdrew him from the field of national politics, to which he never after returned.



About this time the conciliatory propositions of Lord North arrived, and the Governor convoked a meeting of the House of Burgesses. He appeared to consider the troubles as entirely at an end, and brought back his lady and family from their retreat on board the *Fowey* to his residence at Williamsburg. Scarcely, however, had this arrangement been carried into effect, when he took alarm again at some fresh demonstrations of patriotic feeling which occurred in the city, and withdrew with his family to the sloop of war from which he never returned. The House of Burgesses remonstrated strongly against this proceeding, but, finding the Governor resolute, they at length adjourned to the 12th of October, having first acted on and rejected the proposals of the British ministry. Before the adjournment, they summoned a meeting of the Virginia Convention, which assembled at Richmond on the 24th of July.

The proceedings of this body, of which Henry was a member, were marked with great vigor and decision. Assuming that the Governor, by retiring from the capital and taking up his residence on board a ship-of-war, had virtually abdicated his authority, they constituted a Committee of Safety, to represent in his absence the executive branch of the government. An ordinance was also passed for a military organization of the Colony, which provided, among other things, for raising two regiments of regular soldiers, to consist of one thousand and twenty privates, rank and file. The Convention next proceeded to elect officers for these regiments; and the

choice they made shows in a striking manner how strongly the public mind had been impressed by the vigor and efficiency of the late movement of Henry. Although till now wholly inexperienced in military affairs, he was appointed not only colonel of the first regiment, but commander-in-chief of all the forces raised, or to be raised, in Virginia. William Woodford, who had distinguished himself in the preceding war, was appointed colonel of the second regiment. Washington had already been appointed by Congress commander-in-chief of the continental army; and it does not appear that there was any other person in the Colony, whose pretensions, on any other ground but that of mere seniority, could be supposed for a moment to outweigh the brilliant services of Henry, both civil and military.

It appears, however, from subsequent occurrences, that his appointment was not approved by the older patriots, who probably felt some jealousy of the rapid progress which he had already made in the political career, and some disgust at the freedom with which he had opposed their views on the most important subjects. The Committee of Safety, which constituted for the time the executive power of the colony, was composed of this class of persons, under the presidency of Edmund Pendleton, with whom Henry had been brought into collision at the second meeting of the Convention. The arrangement of this body was such as to render it necessary for Henry to resign his commission as colonel and commander-in-chief very shortly after his appointment, and before he had had an oppor-

tunity to exhibit the extent of his capacity for this department of the public service.

In consequence of the measures adopted by the Convention for the military organization of the Colony, Lord Dunmore considered it as in a state of rebellion, and employed himself, with the naval and military forces under his command, in harassing the settlements on the coast. At the close of October, Captain Squire, of the British sloop of war *Otter*, threatened an attack on Hampton, in consequence of which the inhabitants sent to the Committee of Safety, at Williamsburg, for relief. Colonel Woodford, of the second regiment, was immediately despatched with a company of riflemen to take command of the troops. The attack was repulsed without much difficulty. Lord Dunmore next directed his attention to the county of Norfolk, where his movements became so distressing that it appeared indispensable to check his career. Colonel Woodford was the person called upon by the Committee of Safety to perform this service. He was ordered to cross the James River, at Sandy Point, with eight hundred men, and bring Lord Dunmore to action.

Henry had been desirous to be employed himself on this expedition, and had expressed his wishes to the Committee of Safety. As commander-in-chief, it would seem that he had a right to decide at what point his own presence would be most useful; but the committee, without regard to this consideration, had given the preference to Woodford. Henry's reasons for dissatisfaction did not end here. Colonel Woodford, after having been despatched on this

expedition, considered himself as under the immediate direction of the Committee of Safety, or of the Convention, when in session, and made no communications whatever to Henry. On the 6th of December, Henry wrote him a letter, stating, in civil terms, that he had received no despatches from him for a long time, and requesting to be informed of his situation and proceedings. Woodford sent him the desired information, but remarked, at the same time, that, "when joined, he should always esteem himself immediately under the command of Henry, and would obey accordingly; but, when sent to command a separate and distinct body of troops, under the immediate instructions of the Committee of Safety, whenever that body, or the honorable Convention, were sitting, he should look upon it as his indispensable duty to address his intelligence to them, as the supreme power in the Colony."

The question having thus been brought to a direct issue between the two officers was referred by Henry to the decision of the Committee of Safety. In the meantime, Woodford had obtained a brilliant victory over the British at the Great Bridge, which, by stamping his appointment with the seal of success, would naturally confirm the confidence of the Committee in their own judgment, and their preference for Woodford over Henry. The correctness of Henry's views of the subject was, however, too apparent to be seriously questioned, and the Committee, notwithstanding their partiality for Woodford, adopted the following order:

*"In Committee, December, 1775. Resolved,*

unanimously, that Colonel Woodford, although acting upon a separate and detached command, ought to correspond with Colonel Henry, and make returns to him, at proper times, of the state and condition of the forces under his command; and also that he is subject to his orders, when the Convention or the Committee of Safety is not sitting; but that, whilst either of those bodies is sitting, he is to receive his orders from one of them."

The letter of the chairman of the Committee, Mr. Pendleton, enclosing this order to Woodford, is given by Mr. Wirt, and exhibits not only partiality for Woodford, but a feeling of positive unkindness towards Henry. "Believe me, Sir," says Pendleton, "the unlucky step of calling that gentleman from our councils, where he was useful, into the field in an important station, the duties of which he must, in the nature of things, be an entire stranger to, has given me many an anxious and uneasy moment." And again, "We shall not intermeddle with the appointment of a general officer by Congress, lest it should be thought propriety requires our calling, or rather recommending, our present first officer to that station." There is some plausibility in the former suggestion; but Mr. Pendleton well knew that genius, like that of Henry, supplies, under all circumstances, the want of mere routine. His recent campaign, at the head of the Hanover volunteers, had sufficiently shown his capacity for actual service in the field.

A new aspect was given to the position of Henry as commander-in-chief, by the arrival of a corps of

auxiliary troops, which had been requested from North Carolina, and which consisted of five or six hundred men, commanded by Colonel Howe. This officer, whose commission was prior in date to that of Woodford, was permitted by the latter to take command of all the forces. In this capacity he addressed his communications, as Woodford had done, to the Committee of Safety or the Convention, without regard to the rights of Henry as commander-in-chief, who thus found himself set aside, and, as it were, superseded, by an officer from another Colony of only equal rank. The spirit which prompted these proceedings was displayed in a still more decisive form.

Six regiments had been raised by the Convention, in addition to the two commanded by Henry and Woodford; and an application was made to Congress to take the Virginia troops into Continental pay. In acting on this subject, Congress consented to the request in favor of the six additional regiments only. This singular discrimination was, doubtless, the result of a suggestion from the Committee of Safety, made for the purpose of disgusting Henry, and of preventing him from being regarded by Congress as a candidate for one of the higher commissions. At this point the Convention interfered in support of the commander-in-chief of their election, and remonstrated vigorously against the proceedings of Congress, and requested that, if six regiments only could be taken into the Continental service, the two that were first raised might be placed first on the list. Congress acceded to this request,

but still gave way to the same malignant influence that had dictated the former arrangement, so far as to confer the appointment of brigadier-general, in the service of the United States, upon Colonels Howe and Lewis, offering Henry a commission of colonel. This he without hesitation declined, and at the same time resigned that which he held from the authorities of his own State.

The resignation of Henry created great discontent in the army, by whom he was regarded with enthusiastic admiration and attachment, as the most eminent patriot in the State. The troops immediately put on mourning, and proceeded in military array to his lodgings, where the officers presented to him the following address:

*“To Patrick Henry, Jun., Esq.* Deeply impressed with a grateful sense of the obligations we lie under to you, for the polite, humane, and tender treatment manifested to us throughout the whole of your conduct while we had the honor of being under your command, permit us to offer you our sincere thanks, as the only tribute we have in our power to pay to your real merits. Notwithstanding your withdrawing yourself from the service fills us with the most poignant sorrow, as it at once deprives us of our father and general, yet, as gentlemen, we are compelled to applaud your spirited resentment to the most glaring indignity. May your merit shine as conspicuous to the world in general, as it hath done to us, and may Heaven shower its choicest blessings upon you!”

To this address Henry returned the following answer:



“Gentlemen: I am exceedingly obliged to you for your approbation of my conduct. Your address does me the highest honor. This kind testimony of your regard for me would have been an ample reward for services much greater than those which I have had the power to perform. I return you, and each of you, gentlemen, my best acknowledgments for the spirit, alacrity, and zeal, you have constantly shown in your several stations. I am unhappy to part with you. I leave the service, but I leave my heart with you. May God bless you, and give you success and safety, and make you the glorious instruments of saving our country!”

After receiving this address from Henry, the officers invited him to dine with them at the Raleigh tavern, and were preparing, after dinner, to escort him out of town. In the meantime the soldiers had assembled in a rather disorderly manner, and demanded their discharge, declaring that they would not consent to serve under any other commander than Henry. Perceiving that this movement, if not checked, might lead to serious consequences, Henry concluded to pass another night in town, during which he visited the troops at their barracks, and urged them to continue in the service, which, as he said, he had quitted for reasons interesting to himself alone. His exertions, backed by those of other favorite officers, proved successful, and the soldiers acquiesced without further difficulty in the new arrangement.

A feeling similar to that which prevailed among the troops at Williamsburg, manifested itself, with

equal distinctness, in other forms, and particularly in an address which was signed by more than ninety officers stationed at several different points, and, in part, under Colonel Woodford's immediate command.

In consequence of these demonstrations of opinion and feeling, in regard to the resignation of Henry, the Committee of Safety felt themselves obliged to publish a defence of their conduct, which appeared in a leading newspaper, with the signature of *A Friend of Truth*. The Committee represent themselves as having, in the first instance, requested that all the State troops should be taken into the Continental service, and that, when the Convention remonstrated against the discrimination made by Congress, the Committee, in transmitting this remonstrance, had particularly urged a compliance with it, "as a point of great consequence to our harmony, in which may be involved the good of the common cause." The defence, being thus confined to a justification of the formal proceedings of the Committee, has, of course, no tendency to repel the real charge, which is founded in the supposition of secret suggestions of an adverse character.

Such was the termination of the military career of Patrick Henry. There can, of course, be but one opinion among men of correct feeling in regard to the malignant intrigue by which it was brought about; but it may well be doubted whether the result was in any way really injurious, either to Henry or the country. His peculiar gift was eloquence, for which the military service would have afforded no

field whatever ; and, supposing even that he had exhibited, on trial, an aptitude for warlike affairs not inferior to his natural talent for public speaking, it may be questioned whether the army, at least in any other part than that of commander-in-chief, afforded as good a field for honorable and useful activity as the senate and the bar.

As the oracle of his native State, at the time beyond comparison the most prominent in the country, he occupied as important a place as could well have been secured by any other career of service. Had his age permitted him to take part in the debates of Congress, or to fill executive offices under the new Constitution, he might have been rather more extensively known to his contemporaries at home and abroad ; but, on the other hand, by having lived at a somewhat earlier period, and connected his name, as he did, with the first movements of the Revolution, he obtained a very peculiar glory, with which hardly any other growing out of the events of that time can come into competition. The opposition which checked his military career, however unamiable and discreditable to those who were concerned in it, was perhaps not unnatural, considering the unceremonious manner in which he had resisted the advice and authority of the older political leaders. It was fortunate for him that the disgust and jealousy which he thus provoked produced no worse result than his forced retreat from the army, and a passing mortification, for which he was destined to receive very early and ample satisfaction from his grateful fellow-citizens.

The state of the relations between the Colonies and the mother country virtually annulled the established forms of government, and it was necessary for the Colonies to reorganize their political institutions on a new foundation. For this purpose, each Colony was regarded as a distinct community, possessing, by the laws of nature, an inherent right, under existing circumstances, to adopt any form of government which it might prefer. The right was exercised through the agency of popular conventions; and a meeting of this kind was held at Williamsburg, in Virginia, on the 6th of May, 1776. Henry was elected a member of this body for the county of Hanover. On the 15th of May, Mr. Cary reported, from a committee of the whole House, with a suitable preamble, two important resolutions, one of which instructed the delegates to the General Congress to propose to that body a Declaration of Independence and a confederation of the Colonies, while the other provided for raising a committee to prepare a declaration of rights, and a plan of government for the new Commonwealth of Virginia.

In pursuance of the second resolution, a committee was appointed, consisting of thirty-four of the most prominent patriots, including Henry, and, among the others, Mr. Madison. On the 12th of June, the committee reported a declaration of rights, and, on the 29th, a plan of government, both which were unanimously adopted by the Convention. The declaration was prepared by Jefferson, the constitution chiefly by George Mason, a neighbor and intimate friend of Washington. Jefferson had trans-

mitted from Philadelphia, where he was then in attendance as a member of Congress, to his friend, Mr. Wythe, a plan of government, accompanied by a declaration of rights, to be submitted to the Convention. Before it was received, the plan of the committee had already been adopted; but it was subsequently modified, in some parts, in accordance with Mr. Jefferson's views, and the declaration which he had sent was prefixed to it as a preamble. This document coincides, in its general outline, and in many particular passages, with the Declaration of Independence, which was issued, on the 4th of July following, by the General Congress; and, as Mr. Jefferson's name was not at the time publicly connected with the Virginia Declaration, he has sometimes, on the strength of this coincidence, been accused of plagiarism in preparing that of the 4th of July. It is sufficient to say, in answer to this imputation, that the plan of government which he transmitted to Mr. Wythe, including the Declaration as it now stands in the statute-book, are still preserved, in Mr. Jefferson's handwriting, in the archives of Virginia.

By the new Constitution, the executive power was committed to a chief magistrate, with the title of governor, to be annually elected by the legislature, and to be eligible for three successive terms. For the purpose of putting the measure at once in operation, the Convention took upon themselves the responsibility of designating the chief magistrate, and thus obtained an opportunity of compensating Henry, by a signal mark of public favor, for the

*glaring indignity* which, in the language of the address from the troops, had been offered him by the Committee of Safety. On proceeding to a choice, the votes stood as follows: Patrick Henry, sixty; Thomas Nelson, forty-five; John Page, one. Nelson had been president of the council under the preceding government, and was probably put forward by the friends of the committee as an opponent to Henry. He was afterwards elected a member of the new council, but declined the appointment on the score of age and infirmity.

In answer to the notice of his election, communicated to him by a committee of the Convention, the new Governor returned the following address:

*“To the Honorable the President and House of Convention.* Gentlemen: The vote of this day, appointing me Governor of the Commonwealth, has been notified to me, in the most polite and obliging manner, by George Mason, Henry Lee, Dudley Diggs, John Blair, and Bartholomew Danbridge, Esquires.

“A sense of the high and unmerited honor conferred upon me by the Convention fills my heart with gratitude, which I trust my whole life will manifest. I take this earliest opportunity to express my thanks, which I wish to convey to you, gentlemen, in the strongest terms of acknowledgment.

“When I reflect that the tyranny of the British King and Parliament hath kindled a formidable war, now raging throughout this widely-extended continent, and in the operations of which this Commonwealth must bear so great a part; and that, from the

events of this war, the lasting happiness or misery of a great proportion of the human species will finally result; that, in order to preserve this Commonwealth from anarchy, and its attendant ruin, and to give vigor to our councils and effect to all our measures, government hath been necessarily assumed and new-modelled; that it is exposed to numberless hazards and perils, in its infantine state; that it can never attain to maturity, or ripen into firmness, unless it is guided by an affectionate assiduity, and managed by great abilities; I lament my want of talents; I feel my mind filled with anxiety and uneasiness to find myself so unequal to the duties of that important station to which I am called by the favor of my fellow-citizens at this truly critical conjuncture. The errors of my conduct shall be atoned for, so far as I am able, by unwearied endeavors to secure the freedom and happiness of our common country.

“ I shall enter upon the duties of my office, whenever you, Gentlemen, shall be pleased to direct; relying upon the known wisdom and virtue of your honorable House to supply my defects, and to give permanency and success to that system of government which you have founded, and which is so wisely calculated to secure equal liberty, and advance human happiness.

“ I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant,

“ P. HENRY, Jun.”

The election of Henry as Governor was received with great favor by the public, and especially by the



troops. The two regiments which he had recently commanded presented to him the following address :

“ May it please your Excellency ; Permit us, with the sincerest sentiments of respect and joy, to congratulate your Excellency upon your unsolicited promotion to the highest honors a grateful people can bestow. Uninfluenced by private ambition, regardless of sordid interest, you have uniformly pursued the general good of your country ; and have taught the world that an ingenuous love of the rights of mankind, an inflexible resolution, and a steady perseverance in the practice of every public and private virtue, lead directly to preferment, and give the best title to the honors of our uncorrupted and vigorous state. .

“ Once happy under your military command, we hope for more extensive blessings from your civil administration.

“ Intrusted as your Excellency is, in some measure, with the support of a young empire, our hearts are willing, and our arms ready, to maintain your authority as chief magistrate ; happy that we have lived to see the day when freedom and equal rights, established by the voice of the people, shall prevail through the land.

“ We are, may it please your Excellency, your Excellency’s most devoted and most obedient servants.”

To this address Henry returned the following answer :

“ Gentlemen of the First and Second Virginia Regiments: Your address does me the highest

honor. Be pleased to accept my most cordial thanks for your favorable and kind sentiments of my principles and conduct.

“The high appointment to which my fellow-citizens have called me was, indeed, *unsolicited, unmerited*. I am, therefore, under increased obligations to promote the safety, dignity, and happiness of the Commonwealth.

“While the civil powers are employed in establishing a system of government, liberal, equitable, in every part of which the genius of equal liberty breathes her blessed influence, to you is assigned the glorious task of saving, by your valor, all that is dear to mankind. Go on, Gentlemen, to finish the great work you have so nobly and successfully begun. Convince the tyrants again that they shall bleed, that America will bleed to her last drop, ere their wicked schemes find success.

“The remembrance of my former connection with you shall be ever dear to me. I honor your profession, I revere that patriot virtue, which, in your conduct, hath produced cheerful obedience. exemplary courage, and contempt of hardship and danger. Be assured, Gentlemen, I shall feel the highest pleasure in embracing every opportunity to contribute to your happiness and welfare; and I trust the day will come when I shall make one of those that will hail you among the triumphant deliverers of America.

“I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant,

“P. HENRY, Jun.”

The Governor's palace at Williamsburg, which

had been previously converted into an hospital, was now restored to its original use; and, on the 5th of July, the new Governor and Council took the oaths of office and entered on the discharge of their duties.

Thus had Henry, in the short space of thirteen years, which had elapsed since he argued the Parsons' Cause, on the 1st of December, 1763, ascended from the position of an obscure advocate and a mere private citizen, through the responsible stations of member of the Assembly, member of Congress, and commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces, to the chief magistracy of the Commonwealth. He had risen solely by the effect of talent and character, without any aid from powerful connections, without the use of any courtly arts, without even the indefatigable and persevering industry which sometimes supplies the absence of almost every other advantage. Jealousy and envy had tried their worst upon him, not without some transient success, but had signally failed in the end, in all their efforts to obstruct his progress and injure his position. The bar-keeper of the little inn at Hanover had become the occupant of the Governor's palace at Williamsburg. The "obscure advocate" of the Parsons' Cause was now the greatest orator in the country, and one of the leading statesmen and magistrates in a new political system, created in no small degree by his own exertions. The indolent youth, who, at five and twenty, seemed to have lost every chance for success and distinction, had assumed, before forty, an eminent position among those whom Bacon describes as the first

class of great men, *the founders of nations*. The most difficult and important objects of his earthly mission were accomplished. We are now to follow him through the highly honorable but comparatively easy routine of political and professional duty, where we shall find him exhibiting the same talents and virtues which had carried him, with so much brilliancy and success, through the stormy struggles of the Revolution.

## CHAPTER VI

Administration as Governor.—Return to private Life.—Re-elected Governor.—Resigns.—Elected to the Assembly.

THE office of Governor of a State, however honorable as a mark of public esteem, is one, in general, of mere routine, and affords but little opportunity for the display of superior talents, especially in the line in which Henry was particularly distinguished, that of forensic and parliamentary eloquence. His term of service in this capacity is accordingly the portion of his life which furnishes the most scanty supply of materials for the biographer. Soon after his entrance into office, Lord Dunmore evacuated the territory of the State. The military operations, which had been going on during the preceding year, were, in consequence, brought to a close, and were not renewed, to any considerable extent, while Henry was Governor. He had, therefore, no occasion for the exercise of the powers of commander-in-chief, which, as an appendage to the chief magistracy, had now been restored to him by the suffrages of the legislature. In his civil capacity, his administration is represented as having been efficient and successful, but undistinguished by any event of extraordinary importance.

At the first session of the legislature after his election, an incident occurred of a singular, rather than

very important, character, which seems to require some notice in an account of his life, although, from the means of information now extant and accessible, it is difficult to form a very satisfactory idea of it.

The Assembly met in the autumn of the year 1776, perhaps the most gloomy period of the war. The occupation of New York by the British troops, and the losses sustained by Washington, in two or three actions in the neighborhood of that city, had, in a great measure, obliterated the recollection of the successes of the preceding year. The extreme difficulty of providing the resources necessary for keeping up even the appearance of opposition to the numerous well-disciplined and well-appointed armies of England began to be apparent. There was no assurance yet of any aid from abroad. Under these disastrous circumstances, a vague imagination seems to have crossed the minds of a portion of the members of the Virginia legislature, that something might be gained by a recourse to the expedient so often adopted by the Romans in cases of great emergency, the concentration of the whole civil and military power of the republic in the hands of a single person, with the title of dictator.

The inutility, in reference to the general situation of the country, of constituting a State dictator, who would have had, as such, no right to exercise his unbounded powers out of the narrow limits of his own dominion, or for any other than State objects, was sufficiently obvious, one would have thought, to satisfy the least judicious person that such a project, if not dangerous, was wholly destitute of plausibility.

It is certain, however, that the plan was contemplated, for it became the subject of warm and acrimonious discussion among the members of the Assembly. It is also known that Henry was the person whom the projectors of this scheme intended to create dictator. There is no proof that he had himself any share in the plan, which was even distinctly disavowed at the time, and ever since, by himself and his friends. It appears, however, that he did not escape suspicion. While the project was in agitation, Colonel Archibald Cary, then speaker of the Assembly, a patriot of great consideration, but of a somewhat violent temper, met, in the lobby of the house, Colonel Syme, the brother-in-law of Henry, and addressed him as follows: "I am told that your brother wishes to be dictator; tell him, from me, that the day of his appointment shall be the day of his death; for he shall feel my dagger in his heart before the sunset of that day." Colonel Syme replied, in great agitation, that, if such a project existed, his brother-in-law would certainly never lend himself to it, or to any other plan which would endanger the liberty of the country.

Whatever apprehensions may have been entertained at the time by individuals, it is certain that no unfavorable impression was produced upon the general feeling of the Assembly, for, at the next annual election, on the 30th of May, 1777, Henry was unanimously reelected Governor, the members of the legislature being mostly the same as those of the preceding year, and Colonel Cary being again the presiding officer of the House. It does not appear



from the account that the project was at this time formally proposed to the Assembly; but four years afterwards, at another period of general alarm, when the territory of Virginia had become again the theatre of actual hostilities, and when the session of the legislature had been interrupted by an inroad of British troops, the project was again mooted, and not only made the subject of consideration in private, but actually proposed in the Assembly, and lost by only a very few votes.

Mr. Jefferson, who was then Governor of the State, and had, of course, the strongest motives for informing himself, as far as possible, of the real character of this singular scheme, denounces it in strong terms in his "Notes on Virginia," but acquits the persons implicated in it, whom he does not name, of anything worse than an error of judgment. Henry was now, as before, the intended dictator; and, as the plan must have been within his knowledge, it seems hardly possible that it could have been entertained for years in succession, and finally proposed in the legislature, without his concurrence. Supposing that he suggested or favored it, there is, of course, no reason to suspect that he had any other object in view than the ostensible one of the public good.

His favorite reading was the history of Rome; and the example of that illustrious commonwealth, as well as his own experience, had shown him the entire incapacity of deliberative assemblies for the conduct of military affairs. The real objection to the plan of a State dictator was not, in fact, the

danger resulting from the existence of such an office to the public liberty, but its utter inefficiency for the defence of the Union. The expediency of something of the kind, for State purposes, was felt in Virginia, in 1781; and, although the plan of creating a dictator was rejected, resolutions were passed conferring on the Governor and Council extraordinary powers, amounting to an unlimited control over the purse and sword of the State, and requesting Congress to intrust authority of a similar description to the commander-in-chief of the forces of the Union, which was, in fact, done. The concern, if any, which Henry may have had in the project of constituting a dictator need not, therefore, diminish our confidence in his patriotism, although it might, perhaps, impair in some degree our respect for his judgment. Even in this particular, as the tendency of his mind was always for the boldest and most energetic course of action, the plan would not have been very much at variance with the predominant traits of his character.

During the second year of Henry's administration as Governor occurred the intrigue against the influence of Washington, which has sometimes been called the *Conway Cabal*. The origin, character, extent, and precise objects of this conspiracy are not very exactly known. It appears to have included a good many members of Congress and some distinguished officers of the army. The success of General Gates, in the capture of the British troops under Burgoyne, seems to have given to Gates himself, and perhaps to others, the impression that he was superior in efficiency as a commander to Washington.

Those who held this opinion may have thought it politic and patriotic to endeavor to substitute Gates for Washington in the chief command. Other influences, of a less honorable kind, no doubt, had their effect in determining the movement. The existence of the intrigue was made known to Washington through the indiscretion of General Conway, and the odium of the affair has finally rested upon him more directly than upon any other person, though it is difficult to view him in any other light than as an instrument of Gates. The intention seems to have been to act through the medium of Congress, where the cabal had supporters; to disgust Washington by repeated slights, until he should be induced to resign, and then to appoint Gates in his place.

The appointment of Conway to the place of Inspector-General of the army, against the express advice of Washington, and after his hostility to the commander-in-chief was known, was the strongest demonstration made by the conspirators towards carrying their views into effect. The discovery of the plot by Washington, and his cool and discreet, but at the same time firm, conduct on the occasion, apparently disconcerted the leaders, and checked their operations for the time; while the total failure of Gates, in his southern campaign, removed every honest and plausible pretext for a change. Conway's characteristic indiscretion afterwards involved him in a controversy with Congress, which led to his compulsory resignation, and in a duel which nearly cost him his life. While suffering from the effect of his wounds, and in expectation of immediate dissolu-

tion, he wrote a penitential letter to Washington, in which he avows, with expressions of deep regret, his share in the plot, and declares Washington to be, in his eyes, the "great and good man." This voluntary confession of the principal agent in the plot, while it does but little to atone for his guilt, is valuable as a complete bar to the suspicion, which might otherwise have arisen in some minds, that there was a real foundation for imputations of some sort upon the character or capacity of Washington. An attempt was made to implicate Henry in this cabal. An anonymous letter was sent to him on this subject, dated at Yorktown, January 12th, 1778.

A passage in that letter, which is given as an extract from a letter of General Conway to a friend, coincides exactly in substance, and very nearly in the language, with one in a letter from Conway to Gates, which accidentally became known to Washington, and first revealed to him the existence of the plot. It is worthy of remark that the substantial genuineness of the latter passage is here avowed by one of the conspirators, although the defence afterwards set up by Gates, when the affair was brought home to him by Washington, was, that the supposed extract was not in the letter, and was a "wicked forgery." The true state of the case might easily have been shown by producing the letter, which the conspirators never ventured to do. The reality of the passage in question is admitted by the strongest implication in the first letters written by Conway and Gates to Washington on the subject, as was remarked by Washington at the time, in his pointed

and mainly reply to the latter. It is here directly avowed by one of the conspirators. The pretence of forgery was evidently an after-thought. This overture was treated by Henry in the way which might have been expected from his known character. He transmitted the communication to Washington, enclosed in the following letter:

*"Williamsburg, February 20th, 1778.* Dear Sir: You will, no doubt, be surprised at seeing the enclosed letter, in which the encomiums bestowed on me are as undeserved as the censures aimed at you are unjust. I am sorry there should be one man who counts himself my friend, who is not yours.

"Perhaps I give you needless trouble in handing you this paper. The writer of it may be too insignificant to deserve any notice. If I knew this to be the case, I should not have intruded on your time, which is so precious. But there may possibly be some scheme or party forming to your prejudice. The enclosed leads to such a suspicion. Believe me, Sir, I have too high a sense of the obligations America has to you, to abet or countenance so unworthy a proceeding. The most exalted merit hath ever been found to attract envy. But I please myself with the hope that the same fortitude and greatness of mind which have hitherto braved all the difficulties and dangers inseparable from your station, will rise superior to every attempt of the envious partisan.

"I really cannot tell who is the writer of this letter, which not a little perplexes me. The handwriting is altogether strange to me.

"To give you the trouble of this gives me pain.

It would suit my inclination better to give you some assistance in the great business of the war.\* But I will not conceal anything from you by which you may be affected; for I really think your personal welfare and the happiness of America are intimately connected. I beg you will be assured of that high regard and esteem, with which I ever am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and very humble servant."

On the 5th of March, Henry wrote a second letter to Washington on the same subject, as follows:

"Dear Sir: By an express which Colonel Finnie sent to camp I enclosed to you an anonymous letter which I hope got safe to hand. I am anxious to hear something that will serve to explain the strange affair, which I am now informed is taken up respecting you. Mr. Custis has just paid us a visit, and by him I learn sundry particulars concerning General Mifflin that much surprised me. It is very hard to trace the schemes and windings of the enemies to America. I really thought that man its friend; however, I am too far from him to judge of his present temper.

"While you face the armed enemies of our liberty in the field, and, by the favor of God, have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbor in her bosom the miscreant who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter; but when arts, unworthy honest men, are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of that estimation in which the public hold you. Not that I think any testimony I can bear is necessary for your support or private satisfaction; for a bare recol-

lection of what is past must give you sufficient pleasure in every circumstance of life. But I cannot help assuring you, on this occasion, of the high sense of gratitude which all ranks of men in this your native country bear to you. It will give me sincere pleasure to manifest my regard and render my best services to you or yours. I do not like to make a parade of these things, and I know you are not fond of it; however, I hope the occasion will plead my excuse.

“Wishing you all possible felicity, I am, my dear Sir, your ever affectionate friend, and very humble servant.” \*

In the Spring of 1778, Henry was unanimously reelected Governor. At the close of the year, although he had served three terms, and was consequently no longer eligible by the Constitution, it seems to have been the wish and intention of some of the members of the legislature to reelect him once more, on the ground, that, as he was chosen the first time by the Convention, and not by the legislature, the period during which he was constitutionally eligible did not commence till the second year of his administration. Henry, however, did not think proper to acquiesce in this construction of the Constitution, and declined a reelection in the following letter to the speaker of the Assembly:

“*May 28th, 1779.* Sir: The term for which I had the honor to be elected Governor by the late Assembly being just about to expire, and the Constitu-

\* Washington's answers, and all the letters on this subject, may be found in “Washington's Writings,” Vol. V., pp. 483-518.



tion, as I think, making me ineligible to that office, I take the liberty to communicate to the Assembly, through you, Sir, my intention to retire in four or five days.

“I have thought it necessary to give this notification of my design, in order that the Assembly may have the earliest opportunity of deliberating upon the choice of a successor to me in office.

“With great regard, I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant.”

In the Autumn of 1784, six years after the close of his former term of service, Henry, being now eligible by the Constitution, was again elected Governor, and, at the termination of his official year, was reelected to the same office. It was the wish and intention of the legislature that he should have completed another three years' term; but, at the end of the second year, he declined reelection.

The motive which induced him to decline was the embarrassed state of his private affairs. Although his manner of living was entirely free from ostentation, he had found the salary allowed him as Governor insufficient to cover his expenses, and had been compelled to contract debts which he had no means of paying, but by the sale of a part of his estate, or by resuming the practice of his profession. He judiciously chose the latter course. During his employment in the public service some changes had taken place in his private relations. His wife, after lingering through several years of ill-health and suffering, had died. Soon after this event, he had sold the estate on which he had been residing in Hanover

county, and had purchased a tract of eight or ten thousand acres of land in the new county of Henry, which had been erected during his administration, and called by his name.

In the year 1777, he espoused, in second nuptials, a daughter of Mr. A. W. Dandridge, and fixed his residence at his newly-acquired estate, called Leatherwood. On resuming his attendance in the courts, he confined himself chiefly to the duties of counsellor and advocate, leaving it to his junior associates to attend to technical details. He was employed in all the cases of importance, as well in other parts of the State, as in his own immediate neighborhood. After the close of his first term of service as Governor, he was elected a member of the Assembly, and continued till the close of his active life to take a prominent part in the proceedings of that body. In this field of action he distinguished himself by liberality of feeling and soundness of judgment, not less than by the superiority of his powers in debate.

Immediately after the close of the Revolution, he proposed in the Assembly that the persons who had left the State, in consequence of their adherence to the policy of the mother country, should be permitted to return. This measure was violently resisted, but was finally adopted, chiefly under the impression produced by his overwhelming eloquence. A report of his speech on this occasion has been preserved, and is remarkable for its correct views of the economical situation of the country, and its sagacious foresight of the future course of events, as well as for its noble sentiments and richness of language. Judge Tyler,

then speaker of the Assembly, opposed the measure with extreme violence in committee of the whole, and, appealing personally to Henry, as one of its principal supporters, expressed his wonder, that he, of all men, after standing forward as the great champion of Independence, should now appear as the advocate of the detested refugees. Henry replied as follows:

“The personal feelings of a politician ought not to be permitted to enter these walls. The question is a national one, and, in deciding it, if we act wisely, nothing will be regarded but the interest of the nation. On the altar of my country’s good I am willing to sacrifice all personal resentments, all private wrongs; and I flatter myself that I am not the only man in the House who is capable of making such a sacrifice. We have, Sir, an extensive country, *without population*; what can be a more obvious policy than that this country ought to be peopled? *People*, Sir, form the strength, and constitute the wealth, of a nation. I want to see our vast forests filled up by some process a little more speedy than the ordinary course of nature. I wish to see these States rapidly ascending to that rank which their natural advantages authorize them to hold among the nations of the earth.

“Cast your eyes, Sir, over this extensive country; observe the salubrity of your climate; the variety and fertility of your soil; and see that soil intersected in every quarter by bold, navigable streams, flowing to the east and to the west, as if the finger of Heaven were marking out the course of your settlements, in-

viting you to enterprise, and pointing the way to wealth. Sir, you are destined, at some time or other, to become a great agricultural and commercial people; the only question is, whether you choose to reach this point by slow gradations, and at some distant period; lingering on through a long and sickly minority; subjected, meanwhile, to the machinations, insults, and oppressions, of enemies, foreign and domestic, without sufficient strength to resist and chastise them; or whether you choose rather to rush at once, as it were, to the full enjoyment of those high destinies, and be able to cope, single-handed, with the proudest oppressor of the Old World. If you prefer the latter course, as I trust you do, encourage emigration; encourage the husbandmen, the mechanics, the merchants, of the Old World, to come and settle in this land of promise; make it the home of the skilful, the industrious, the fortunate, and happy, as well as the asylum of the distressed; fill up the measure of your population as speedily as you can, by the means which Heaven hath placed in your power; and I venture to prophesy there are those now living who will see this favored land amongst the most powerful on earth; able, Sir, to take care of herself, without resorting to that policy which is always so dangerous, though sometimes unavoidable, of calling in foreign aid. Yes, Sir; they will see her great in arts and in arms; her golden harvests waving over fields of immeasurable extent; her commerce penetrating the most distant seas, and her cannon silencing the vain boasts of those who now proudly affect to rule the waves.

“But, Sir, you must have *men*; you cannot get along without them; those heavy forests of valuable timber under which your lands are groaning must be cleared away; those vast riches which cover the face of your soil, as well as those which lie hid in its bosom, are to be developed and gathered only by the skill and enterprise of men; your timber, Sir, must be worked up into ships, to transport the productions of the soil from which it has been cleared; then you must have commercial men and commercial capital to take off your productions and find the best markets for them abroad. Your great want, Sir, is the want of *men*, and these you must have, and will have speedily, if you are wise.

“Do you ask how you are to get them? Open your doors, Sir, and they will come in; the population of the Old World is full to overflowing; that population is ground, too, by the oppressions of the governments under which they live. Sir, they are already standing on tiptoe upon their native shores, and looking to your coasts with a wishful and longing eye; they see here a land blessed with natural and political advantages which are not equalled by those of any other country upon earth; a land on which a gracious Providence hath emptied the horn of abundance; a land over which Peace hath now stretched forth her white wings, and where content and plenty lie down at every door! Sir, they see something still more attractive than all this; they see a land in which Liberty hath taken up her abode; that Liberty, whom they had considered as a fabled goddess, existing only in the fancies of poets; they see her here a real

divinity, her altars rising on every hand throughout these happy States, her glories chanted by three millions of tongues, and the whole region smiling under her blessed influence. Sir, let but this our celestial goddess, Liberty, stretch forth her fair hand toward the people of the Old World, tell them to come, and bid them welcome, and you will see them pouring in from the north, from the south, from the east, and from the west; your wildernesses will be cleared and settled, your deserts will smile, your ranks will be filled, and you will soon be in a condition to defy the powers of any adversary.

“But gentlemen object to any accession from Great Britain, and particularly to the return of the British refugees. Sir, I feel no objection to the return of those deluded people; they have, to be sure, mistaken their own interests most wofully, and most wofully have they suffered the punishment due to their offences. But the relations which we bear to them and to their native country are now changed; their king hath acknowledged our Independence; the quarrel is over; peace hath returned, and found us a free people. Let us have the magnanimity, Sir, to lay aside our antipathies and prejudices, and consider the subject in a political light. Those are an enterprising, moneyed people; they will be serviceable in taking off the surplus produce of our lands, and supplying us with necessaries during the infant state of our manufactures. Even if they be inimical to us in point of feeling and principle, I can see no objection, in a political view, to making them tributary to our advantage. And as I have no prejudices to pre-

vent my making this use of them, so, Sir, I have no fear of any mischief that they can do us. Afraid of *them*! What, Sir, shall *we*, who have laid the proud British *lion* at our feet, now be afraid of his *whelps*?"

The concluding phrase is not, perhaps, entitled, as a specimen of rhetoric, to all the praise that has been bestowed upon it; but it is impossible to speak too favorably of the substance of the speech. The liberality of our institutions, and especially the generous and truly wise policy which throws open our vacant territory, at a merely nominal price, to all who choose to occupy it, are working out the results predicted by Henry with a rapidity which even his ardent imagination could hardly have anticipated.

In the same liberal spirit, he supported and carried, against vigorous opposition, a proposal for removing the restraints on British commerce. It was apprehended by some that a free admission of British ships would exclude the trade of all other nations, and deprive us of the advantage of competition in reducing the price of our supplies from abroad. Henry repelled this objection with splendid eloquence; enlarged on the distress which the people had suffered by the interruption of foreign commerce; and concluded with proclaiming in emphatic language the doctrine of the liberty of trade, less familiar to the public ear at that time than it is now. "Why should we fetter commerce?" was his concluding remark; "a man in chains droops and bows to the earth; his spirits are broken; but let him twist the fetters from his legs, and he will stand upright. Fetter not Commerce, Sir; let her be as free as air. She will range



the whole creation, and return on the wings of the four winds of heaven to bless the land with plenty."

During the session of 1784, Henry proposed in the Assembly a measure marked by the same originality of thought and humanity of feeling, which dictated the others, but somewhat questionable, perhaps, on the score of practicability and expediency. The inconvenience which had been suffered, during the last and preceding wars, from the aggressions of the neighboring Indians appeared to render it a matter of high importance to inspire them in some way with more amicable sentiments. Formal treaties of peace and alliance were known to be wholly ineffectual. Henry proposed to effect the object by a law to encourage intermarriage between the two races, and brought in a bill holding out strong inducements to the formation of connections of this kind, such as a pecuniary bounty, to be repeated at the birth of every child, exemption from taxes, and the free use of an institution for education, to be established for the purpose at the expense of the State.

The bill had its first and second reading, and was engrossed for its final passage, apparently under the influence of Henry's support; for no sooner was he withdrawn from the House, by his election as Governor for a second term, which took place at this time, than the bill, on coming up for a third reading, was rejected. Had the relative numbers and position of the two races been destined to remain as they were at this time, such a measure might have had a good effect, although the popular feeling, which has always been opposed to a mixture of races,

would have probably rendered it ineffectual. But the overwhelming and constantly increasing preponderance of the whites in power and numbers pretty soon settled the question in a different way, by compelling the red men to retire from the frontiers of Virginia and seek for new hunting grounds in the Far West.

Among the measures supported, though not proposed, by Henry, was a resolution for the incorporation of all Christian societies which might make application to that effect, and another imposing a general assessment for the support of public worship, but leaving it to the discretion of the individual to appropriate the tax levied upon him to any church which he might prefer. The bills founded upon these resolutions were reported after Henry had ceased to be a member of the House; but the principles embodied in them had received his warm support in the introductory stage. The bill founded on the first of the two resolutions became a law; the other was rejected by a small majority on the third reading.

On the 4th of December, 1786, soon after his final retirement from the chief magistracy of his State, Henry was elected by the legislature one of the delegates to the Convention for revising the Articles of Confederation among the States. His name stood upon the list, as recorded in the journal, next after that of Washington. The same imperious consideration which had compelled him to decline reelection as Governor, the urgent necessity of attending to his private affairs, also imposed it upon him as a duty to refrain from the acceptance of this high and honorable commission, the full importance of which was

not, however, so distinctly perceived at the time as it is now. After the national Convention, which met the following year at Philadelphia, had terminated their labors, and submitted the result to the people, a State Convention was called in Virginia, to take the proposed Constitution into consideration. Henry was elected by the county of Prince Edward, where he then resided, a member of this body, which met at Richmond on the 2d of June, 1788.

## CHAPTER VII

Virginia Convention for considering the Plan of the Federal Constitution.—Henry opposes its Adoption.

IN following the progress of Henry through his long political career up to the point which we have now reached, we have more than once seen him acting upon his own views, in direct opposition to those of the most distinguished and patriotic of his fellow-laborers, in the common cause of Independence and Liberty. On all these occasions he had the satisfaction of finding his course sanctioned, after a short interval, by the almost unanimous approbation of his fellow-citizens; and the public opinion of the country seems to have settled down in the conviction that the bold, vigorous, and, as it may have appeared to some at the time, violent policy, which he recommended and acted on, was the one best fitted to effect the common purpose.

In regard to the course which he pursued in the Convention for considering the plan of the Federal Constitution, he did not enjoy the same good-fortune. He appeared in that Assembly as a determined opponent of the adoption of the plan, and maintained his views throughout the whole discussion with his characteristic ardor, perseverance, and power of logic and eloquence. Taking the whole country through, he was by far the most distinguished and conspicuous

person who opposed the new system. The great prosperity which the country has enjoyed for a century in succession under this system, and which is justly attributed in no small degree to its beneficial influence, has long since stamped the Constitution with the seal of general favor. It is now a matter of surprise and regret to find that any one, and especially one so renowned as Henry for talent, patriotism, and eloquence, should have failed to perceive what has since become so apparent to all, and should have labored with so much earnestness to prevent the adoption of a system that has proved, in practice, the salvation of the country. We are half tempted to doubt whether the opponents of the Constitution acted with correct intentions and purely patriotic feelings, in resisting a measure which appears to us, at the present day, so clearly and manifestly right, and to attribute their course to perversity and selfishness, rather than to the lofty and patriotic motives upon which it was at the time justified by themselves.

We must recollect, however, in forming an opinion upon their conduct, that the Constitution presented itself to their minds under a very different aspect from that in which it now appears to us. It came before the State Conventions, no doubt, under circumstances, in some respects, of the most auspicious character. It was offered as the result of the long and anxious deliberations of a most respectable assembly; it bore the signature of Washington. But there were other considerations connected with it of a different kind. It was known that the Convention had been greatly divided in opinion, and that the

most important provisions in the Constitution had been sanctioned by the smallest possible majorities, after the most intense and bitter opposition. The plan was untried, and patriotism imperiously required that an untried system, involving a complete revolution in the government, should be examined with extreme jealousy. This appeared the more necessary, as the Convention, in framing a new government, instead of merely amending the existing one, had in some degree exceeded its formal powers.

The system presented, in its most conspicuous, if not most important, features, particularly that of a single executive magistrate, forms repugnant to the cherished and habitual feelings of the people. These feelings were, of course, not diminished, in the present instance, by the knowledge, that the prominent friends of the Constitution had urged with great earnestness in the Convention the adoption of the provisions in a much more obnoxious shape. If the tendency of the system, as it stood, was considered doubtful, the fact that its ablest supporters in the Convention declared the British Constitution, especially in the executive branch, to be the model of a good government, might well justify the suspicion that the new project had, as Henry remarked, an "awful squinting towards monarchy." It may even be doubted whether the views of the opponents of the plan were not, on some points, more correct than those of its supporters, and whether the immense amount of good, which has resulted from the adoption of the Constitution, may not have been the effect of its great leading principles, operating in spite,

rather than by the aid, of some provisions, which were considered at the time, both by friends and opponents, as more important than they really were, and which, so far as they have operated, have been of injurious rather than beneficial tendency. On the whole, it not only seems unnecessary to attribute the action of the opponents of the Constitution to perversity or selfish views, but it may even be doubted whether the course pursued by them was not the one which would most naturally recommend itself to an ardent and uncompromising friend of popular principles of government.

The point upon which the debates in the General Convention chiefly turned was the question, whether the States should possess an equal vote in Congress, as had been the case under the old confederacy, or a number of votes proportional in each case to their comparative population. The Virginia plan, as it was called, which had been proposed by Governor Randolph, was supported with great power by Mr. Madison, who recommended the latter course. The former was the leading feature in the New Jersey plan, proposed by Mr. Paterson. After protracted and warm debate, the point was finally compromised by granting to the States an equal vote in the Senate, and a proportional one in the House of Representatives. This arrangement was not satisfactory at the time to the ardent supporters of either principle.

Some of the most prominent champions of the New Jersey scheme actually quitted the Convention and returned home after it was agreed upon, under the impression that the rights of the States had been



abandoned, that the compromise could never be sanctioned by them, and that there could be no advantage in taking any further part in the proceedings. On the other hand, the most active friends of the Virginia model were equally dissatisfied, though for a directly opposite reason. Governor Randolph refused to affix his name to his own plan as amended, and Mr. Madison, its principal champion, although he consented to sign it, declared, and has recorded the opinion in his report of the debates, that he considered it as completely vitiated by the introduction of the equal vote of the States in the Senate, which would, as he thought, inevitably perpetuate in the new system the essential vices of the old confederacy.

But, though the prominent supporters of the Virginia scheme in the Convention were wholly discontented with the result, they were generally considered, by the people at large of all parties, as having substantially carried their point, and given to the General Government a great increase of strength, as compared with that which it possessed under the confederacy. The experience of now a century has confirmed the correctness of this view of the subject. The equal vote of the States in the Senate has not thus far proved to be of any practical importance for the purpose which led to its introduction. All the struggles that have taken place in Congress, including even those in which the respective pretensions of the States and the General Government were directly at issue, have been decided by comparison of the strength of great parties pervading the whole Union, as represented in both branches of Congress, and not

by the votes of the States, as represented on a footing of equality in the Senate; while the whole history of the country, before and since the adoption of the Constitution, proves beyond a shadow of doubt that the power of the General Government, under the present system, is much greater than it was under the confederacy. The difference is, in fact, nearly equivalent to that between a government sufficiently powerful for every desirable purpose and no government at all.

In accordance with the impression which prevailed at the time, and has thus been confirmed by experience, respecting the substantial character of the plan proposed by the Convention, it received, in general, when submitted to the people, the support of those who favored the Virginia system, and the idea of strengthening the General Government. Even the prominent champions of the Virginia scheme in the Convention who had strongly expressed their dissatisfaction with it as amended by that body, seem, on full consideration, to have taken a more favorable view of the result. Governor Randolph, who had refused to sign the plan as adopted, and Mr. Madison, who declared that he considered the original Virginia scheme as entirely vitiated by the amendments, were the two most active and prominent supporters of the Constitution in the Virginia Convention. Even Hamilton, who had said, in the Federal Convention that he thought both the plans proposed entirely worthless from their inefficiency, and regarded the British Constitution as the model of a good government, appeared in the New York State

Convention as the leading champion of the plan, and labored, through the press, with his characteristic talent and energy, in concurrence with Madison and Jay, in recommending it to the people. On the other hand, the opposition to the plan in the State Conventions was generally led by the members of the General Convention, who had sustained in that body the pretensions of the States, and looked with apprehension on any decided augmentation of the power of the Union.

Patrick Henry, as was stated in the last chapter, had been appointed a delegate from Virginia to the General Convention, but, from prudential motives, had declined to accept the trust. He was, therefore, not personally committed to either of the parties which had been formed in that body; but there were several circumstances in his character and position which naturally led him to sympathize in opinion and feeling with the partisans of the States. His native Commonwealth was, at that time, by far the most important member of the Union. Any increase of the power of the General Government, as compared with that of the States, operated, of course, more directly upon Virginia than upon any of her sisters. While several of the prominent Virginia statesmen, such as Washington, Madison, Randolph, Marshall, and others, overcame, by considerations of a more general character, the force of this local feeling, it was not unnatural that others, and especially those whose political career had identified their personal importance very closely with that of their own State, should look at the whole question chiefly in reference

to the manner in which it affected State interests, and, finding its operation in this respect unfavorable to Virginia, should, for this reason only, decide against it.

This was preëminently the case with Henry. He had been, through the most active period of his life, the most prominent citizen in the Old Dominion, had occupied her highest places of trust and honor, both civil and military, and had imparted to them, by his splendid eloquence, a consideration which, as mere official employments, they would not otherwise have had. On the other hand, he had taken little or no part in the administration of the General Government; had not particularly distinguished himself as a member of Congress, and had no reason to consider his personal importance or reputation as immediately involved in the turn that might be taken by the affairs of the Union.

It may be added that, while he was thus naturally led by his personal associations and previous career, to favor the importance of the States, rather than that of the General Government, he was also strongly disposed, by his peculiar views, to look with disapprobation upon any attempt to enlarge, in any way, the attributes of government, whether State or General, at the expense of the rights of the people. He had professed and acted on through life, very often under difficult circumstances, and with painful sacrifices of personal comfort, the most decidedly republican principles of government, had constituted himself, in his own State, a sort of tribune of the people and protector of their rights against the influence of

a wealthy aristocracy, and was probably the most determined republican, as well as the most zealous State-rights man in the country. There was, therefore, in his case, a remarkable concurrence of all the circumstances that could well be expected to operate in producing in the mind of any individual a disposition, independently of the actual merits of the case, to oppose the new plan. Those who reflect upon the immense influence of accidental circumstances on the will and judgment, who recollect how large a portion of their own opinions on the most important subjects have been mainly determined by causes substantially of this character, will not be surprised, however strong their conviction may be of the essential excellence of the Federal Constitution, that a patriot so pure, intelligent, and sagacious as Henry, should have been found at the time of its adoption among its most active opponents.

It is, therefore, unnecessary to suppose, as some have done, that Henry, and the other prominent opponents of the Constitution, were actuated by personal or selfish motives. We may even go farther and admit that there was not only great plausibility, but much actual truth, in some of their views. However beneficial may have been the operation of the Federal Constitution as a whole, it is not to be disguised, that, under some of its aspects, its tendency is different. This remark is made with particular allusion to the provision for the chief executive magistracy, which may, perhaps, be considered, with propriety, as the weak point in the Constitution.

Our governments, both State and National,

viewed under one of these aspects, belong to the class of elective monarchies; and, although the shortness of the term for which our rulers are elected, and the limited extent of the powers intrusted to them, abate very much the agitation naturally incident to this form of polity, experience has already shown that the difficulty is by no means entirely overcome. By throwing into the lottery of political life the glittering prize of the presidency, we have greatly augmented the intensity and eagerness of the struggle for official distinction. If the constitution of the executive department in this particular form were indispensable to the successful action of the government, or attended with advantages sufficient to counterbalance the evils resulting from it, we should, of course, accept the latter with cheerfulness, as the natural price which we must pay for the former; but this does not seem to be the case. The importance attached, in public opinion, to the office of president, is wholly disproportionate to the nature of the political functions connected with it, which are chiefly matters of mere routine.

The constant agitation, which is kept up throughout the country by the struggle for this office, and the great increase of intensity which it gives to party divisions, are, therefore, a clear injury, without any corresponding benefit. If the inconveniences, which we have thus far experienced, be the worst that are likely to result from the existing system, we might endure them with the less reluctance, since, considerable as they in fact are, they are yet trifling when compared with the terrible oppressions incident to



the differently constituted governments of the Old World. But there is no small ground for apprehension that, as the country advances in wealth and population, the inconveniences alluded to may assume a more malignant character than they have hitherto worn. If our institutions are destined, as many suppose, to a premature and violent termination, it can hardly be doubted that the struggle for the presidency will be the immediate occasion of the convulsions by which it will be brought about. Without giving way to gloomy forebodings of contingent, perhaps on the whole improbable, results, and assuming that the good sense of the people will be competent to correct, by amendment of the Constitution, any error that may become apparent, it is yet certain that if the unfortunate result alluded to should happen, we shall have sacrificed the solidity and permanence of our government for a bawble of no essential value.

It is somewhat remarkable that the inconveniences and dangers incident to the nature of elective monarchies, even in their most qualified and limited form, do not seem to have occurred to the minds of the members of the Federal Convention, while deliberating upon this part of the Constitution. Their attention was so entirely absorbed by the question of the relative influence of the States in Congress, that they felt comparatively little interest in the executive department, and continued almost mechanically the form in use under the colonial system, without reflecting that the administration of a subject province under the orders of a metropolitan govern-



ment, and the chief magistracy of an independent State, are functions of an entirely different character, and should be provided for on directly opposite principles. The sagacious mind of Henry, predisposed as it was, for the reasons above specified, to take an unfavorable view of the plan of the Convention, seized at once upon the weak point in the Constitution as the principal object of attack.

The overwhelming power of the president, and its fatal influence upon the independence of the States and the liberty of the people, are the leading topics of his numerous and frequently powerful speeches in the Virginia Convention. There is, doubtless, some, perhaps we may say much, exaggeration in these views; but the experience of a century has tended, on the whole, to confirm rather than refute them. Of the parties that have subsequently been formed in the country, those which represent most directly the friends of the Constitution at the period of the adoption, have not been, by any means, the least conspicuous in denouncing as a great evil the undue importance that is attributed, in our system, to the chief executive magistracy. It remains to be seen whether the evil can be cured by the quiet process of amendment, or whether, if it be too deeply implanted in this system to admit of that remedy, it will be kept hereafter, as it has hitherto been, in practical subordination by the sounder and better parts of the system, or will finally assume new degrees of malignity, and exercise upon the whole form of the government the fatal and destructive influence which the patriotic fears of Henry had led him to anticipate.

It will not be necessary here to analyze accurately all the speeches made by Henry in the Virginia Convention. They are very numerous, and occupy no inconsiderable portion of the volume of debates. It may be proper, however, to cast a rapid glance over the course of the proceedings, and to indicate briefly the part taken by him on the different questions that successively came under discussion.

The Convention met at Richmond, on the 2d of June, 1788. From the great importance of the State of Virginia in the Union, and the care with which the members of the Convention had been selected, it was an assembly hardly less imposing than the Federal Convention itself. Eight States had already ratified the Constitution. Five were yet to pass upon it. By the terms of the instrument, the consent of one more would make it binding on the ratifying States. It may well be doubted, however, whether, without the ratification of Virginia, it could have gone into successful operation. Independently of other considerations, Virginia was the residence of Washington; and there can be no question that the anticipation of his election as the first President was an essential and indispensable requisite to the practical adoption of the Constitution. The proceedings of the Virginia Convention were therefore watched with intense interest throughout the country, and the results of its deliberations looked for with extreme anxiety, both by the friends and enemies of the new system, as decisive on the main question by its ultimate adoption or rejection.

The Convention was organized by the election of

Mr. Pendleton as chairman. On the 4th of June, the debate commenced; as a preliminary step, a resolution had been passed that no questions should be taken upon any particular clause in the Constitution before the whole instrument had undergone a full discussion. From the 4th to the 13th of June, the debate was carried on upon the instrument at large. On the 15th, the consideration of the separate clauses began, and it was continued until the 24th. On the 25th, the general discussion was renewed; and, on the 26th, it was closed by the adoption of the Constitution. In the debate of the 25th, Henry had proposed a bill of rights and a series of amendments, the adoption of which by the other States was to be made a condition of the ratification of the Constitution by Virginia. The proposition, as made by him, was rejected, and the Constitution adopted without condition; but, immediately after the vote for the ratification, a committee was raised to report a bill of rights and a series of amendments, to be submitted to the other States in the form prescribed by the Constitution. On the 27th, the committee reported the bill of rights and amendments proposed by Henry, and their report was accepted. This proceeding was the last act of the Convention.

The debates in this assembly were more fully and ably reported than those of any of the other State Conventions, and fill an octavo volume of nearly five hundred closely-printed pages, a volume second only in value for the student of constitutional law to the inestimable report of the debates in the Federal Convention by Madison. The discussions of the first

thirteen days are particularly interesting. They were managed chiefly by Nicholas, Pendleton, Randolph, Marshall, and Madison, in favor of the adoption, and by Henry, George Mason, Monroe, and Grayson, against it. All these persons were men of the highest order of talent, but the real champions and leaders of the two parties were Henry and Madison. No two men could be more unlike in their intellectual constitution, and each possessed qualities in which he was decidedly superior to the other. Henry excelled his opponent, perhaps, in original power of mind, certainly in brilliancy of imagination and splendor of natural eloquence. He had also the advantage that belongs to greater experience; the habit of success, and a name endeared to the people by association with a long career of public service and the highest political and military employments. In calm good sense, instinctive sagacity, extent of information, and clearness of reasoning, he was surpassed by his comparatively youthful rival.

The qualities in which Henry excelled are undoubtedly those that are most likely to produce effect on a popular assembly. It is, therefore, highly creditable to the general intelligence of the Virginia Convention that they manfully withstood his overwhelming eloquence, backed as it was by the almost irresistible charm attached to his name and character, and yielded their assent to the cool and clear logic of Madison. In accounting for this result, we must doubtless take into view the array of able coadjutors by whom Madison was supported in the Convention, including even Marshall, who, though he said but

little, whenever he did speak always spoke to the point with unrivalled power; the example of the other States, where the Constitution had already been adopted; and, above all, the general reverence for the character of Washington, who stood behind the curtain as a sort of guardian genius of the precious instrument that bore his signature, unseen, unheard, but exercising a moral power that was deeply felt by every one. But, after making all the necessary allowance for these circumstances, it cannot well be questioned that the influence of Madison, through his talents, character, and persevering exertions, was the immediate cause, in the Virginia Convention, as it had been before in the general one, of the adoption of the Constitution. To him belongs the transcendent honor of having first supported, and subsequently sustained and carried through, by means of his own personal influence, at every subsequent stage of its progress, this great charter of our country's prosperity and freedom. We may search in vain the long rolls of history for a higher title to civil and political distinction.

A more particular, though, of course, very cursory, survey of the progress of the debate will show more distinctly how large and important was the part taken in it by the subject of our narrative. After the preliminary proceedings had been terminated, the debate was opened by Henry, who moved for "the reading of the Act of Assembly appointing deputies to meet at Annapolis, to consult with those of other States on the situation of the commerce of the United States, the Act of Assembly appointing deputies to

meet at Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, and other public papers relative thereto." The purpose of Henry, in making this motion, was, of course, to introduce the formidable, and certainly not entirely ill-founded objection, that the Federal Convention, in forming a new system, instead of merely revising the old one, had exceeded its powers. The idea was, however, not insisted on, and, after a few remarks by Mr. Pendleton in opposition to it, the motion of Henry was withdrawn. The facility with which this preliminary objection, perhaps the strongest of a positive kind that could be brought against the Constitution, was yielded by its most determined and vigorous antagonist, shows already that the moral forces which were operating indirectly in favor of it had sapped the strength of opposition even before the debate commenced, and afforded a pregnant indication of the probable issue.

This difficulty having been overcome, the discussion commenced with a speech from Mr. Nicholas, in which he recapitulated, in a forcible manner, and somewhat at large, the principal arguments in favor of the adoption of the plan. He was followed by Henry in a short speech, in which, describing the proposition of the new plan to be, as it really was, a proposition to effect a revolution in the General Government, he calls upon its friends to show cause for so extraordinary a proceeding. The country is, to all outward appearance, tranquil and prosperous. In such a state of things, what reasonable motive can be alleged for proceeding to this desperate extremity, which, by general acknowledgment, can

only be justified by the existence of mis-government and oppression in their worst and most intolerable form? In the tenor of this inquiry we find a second evidence of the care with which Henry had surveyed the whole ground, and the skill with which he had selected the positions that he intended successively to occupy. The General Convention had exceeded its powers. This is the first objection, and is in the nature of a plea to the jurisdiction of the court at law. This being waived, a second objection, still preliminary, but of a more substantial character, presents itself. The country is tranquil and prosperous; the people are happy. Under such circumstances, it seems like political insanity to propose an entire revolution in the government.

The friends of the Constitution did not meet these objections with any very precise or elaborate reply. They probably deemed it a more politic plan of campaign to reserve their main strength till the positive objections had been stated, rather than to assume the burden of proof, and undertake to show by argument the necessity of a change. Governor Randolph made a short and not very powerful answer to the speech of Henry. He was followed by George Mason, in a speech against the plan, after which Mr. Madison made a few remarks, which closed the proceedings of the first day of the debates. On the day following, the discussion was continued by Messrs. Pendleton and Lee, in reply to Henry; but it was now apparent that it was not the intention of the friends of the plan to meet the question upon this ground. Perceiving this, Henry proceeded to un-



mask his main battery, and occupied the remainder of the second day by a long and powerful speech, in which he presented in detail the positive objections. It is, of course, impossible to state them fully in this connection, and the general outline of the argument is familiar to most readers of political history. The leading topics of the speech, as of all those which were made by Henry during the discussion, were the danger of consolidation, and the overwhelming power of the executive.

The speech is badly reported, and in two or three of the most important parts is avowedly imperfect. It probably gives a very inadequate representation of the language of the orator, to say nothing of his looks, tones, and gestures, everything, in short, that is embraced under the significant and comprehensive term *action*. It contains, however, even in the shape in which we have it, many brilliant and powerful passages, one of them containing the celebrated and often quoted phrase, in which the speaker denounces the plan as deformed by "an awful squinting towards monarchy." It is easy to conceive, that, as delivered by the orator himself, it must have produced a prodigious effect upon the assembly.

The system of attack contemplated by the opponents of the plan was now fully developed. They had been compelled by the prudent management of its friends to assume the offensive, and leave to the latter the comparatively easy task of answering positive objections. It was now necessary to take the field in reply, in full force, under the direction of the ablest champions. The two following days, the 6th

and 7th of June, were accordingly occupied by long and elaborate speeches from Randolph, Nicholas, Corbin, and Madison, in which they successively surveyed the whole ground taken by Henry, and presented, under every variety of form and color, the most plausible answers that could be made to his objections. At the close of the debate of the 7th, Henry commenced, and continued through the greater part of that of the 8th another long and powerful speech in rejoinder; and was again answered at great length on the same and the next following day, by Governor Randolph. After this the discussion was kept up with undaunted spirit, though in a somewhat less regular form, by the principal speakers on both sides, until the 15th, when it was at length brought to a close. The discussion of the separate articles which occupied the interval between this date and the 23d, was necessarily of a more desultory character, and would not admit of a precise analysis. The debates on the judiciary, which occupied the 20th and 21st, were particularly interesting.

On the 24th, the general discussion was renewed, and Henry now made his final effort, founding his proposition of a ratification on the condition of the acceptance by the other States of a bill of rights and a series of amendments. At the close of this speech, a scene occurred which affords a good example of the manner in which the poetical element has blended itself with the simple truth in the accounts handed down to us of Henry's speeches and life. In the closing passages of his speech, while descanting on

the immense importance of the question at issue, Henry appealed to the beings of a superior order, who might be supposed to survey from their celestial abodes with deep interest the progress of a struggle involving the future fortunes of half mankind. "To those beings," says Mr. Wirt, on the authority of Judge Archibald Stuart, who was a member of the Convention and present at the debate, "to those beings he had addressed an invocation with a most thrilling look and action that made every nerve shudder with supernatural horror, when, lo! a storm at that instant arose, which shook the whole building and the spirits whom he had called seemed to have come at his bidding. Nor did his eloquence or the storm immediately cease. Availing himself of the incident with a master's art, he seemed to mix in the fight of his ethereal auxiliaries, and, 'rising on the wings of the tempest, to seize upon the artillery of heaven and direct its fiercest thunders against the heads of his adversaries.' The scene became insupportable, and the House rose without the formality of adjournment, the members rushing from their seats with precipitation and confusion."

The reporter presents the passage in the speech of Henry here alluded to in the following form:

"The honorable gentleman tells you of important blessings, which he imagines will result to us and to mankind in general from the adoption of this system. As for me, I can only see the awful immensity of the dangers with which it is pregnant. I see it. I feel it. I see beings of a higher order anxious concerning our decision. I extend my view beyond

the horizon that limits human vision and behold those superior intelligences anticipating the political revolutions which in process of time may take place in America, and the consequent happiness or misery of mankind. I am led to believe that much of the account on one side or the other will depend on what we now decide. Our own happiness alone is not affected by the event. All nations are interested in the determination. We have it in our own power to secure the happiness of one half of the human race. Its adoption may involve the misery of the other hemisphere."

"Here," says the reporter, in a parenthesis, a violent storm arose, which put the House in such disorder that Mr. Henry was obliged to conclude."

Mr. Wirt remarks, in a note, that, "by comparing the statement of Judge Stuart with this passage in the printed debates, the reader may decide how far these may be relied on as specimens of Mr. Henry's eloquence." The passage as reported certainly carries internal evidence of being a very feeble and inadequate transcript of the orator's language; but we suspect that the reporter's parenthesis will be thought by most readers a much more natural and plausible account of the reasons and manner of adjournment than the glowing statement of the learned judge.

The general discussion was continued on the 25th, and two or three new speakers took, for the first time, a prominent part in the debate; Colonel Innis, then attorney-general of the State, who seems to have been a very remarkable orator, and whose elo-

quence is characterized by Mr. Wirt, in his usual florid style, as a "splendid conflagration," Judge Tyler, and Zachariah Johnson. Randolph, Henry, Madison, Monroe, and Grayson, mingled as usual in the discussion. At the close of this day's debate, the question was taken, and on the two following days the proceedings of the Convention were brought, in the manner that has been already mentioned, to a close.

Although the views of Henry were not adopted by the Convention, he seems to have suffered no diminution of his personal influence in consequence of the part which he took on this occasion. At the session of the Assembly, which was held on the following October, he succeeded in preventing the election of Mr. Madison to the Senate of the United States, and in carrying that of Richard Henry Lee and Mr. Grayson, the latter of whom had been in the Convention an active opponent of the Constitution. At the same session, he moved a resolution requesting Congress to call another General Convention, for the purpose of amending the instrument as adopted. A motion was made to amend this resolution by substituting another, inviting Congress to propose to the States, in the constitutional way, the bill of rights and series of amendments proposed by Henry, and adopted at the Richmond Convention. This motion was rejected, and the original proposal of Henry was adopted by a triumphant majority of more than two to one.

Thus terminated the action of Henry upon the great reform effected in the government by the adop-

tion of the Federal Constitution. While we render the fullest justice to the correctness of his intentions, and to the superiority of talent and eloquence with which he supported his views in the Convention, we may pronounce it without hesitation a most fortunate thing for the country that they did not prevail. Still more fortunate will it be if the dangers which he apprehended shall prove, in the sequel, to have been imaginary, and not to have been adjourned for a time, only to burst upon us with greater fury in proportion to the immense augmentation which will have taken place in the interval in the extent and population of the country. The enemies of liberal constitutions abroad generally look forward to the early occurrence among us of some such catastrophe, and are sustained in their gloomy forebodings by the opinions of many of our most judicious and best informed citizens. Yet when we find the superior liberality of our institutions, accompanied, as it thus far has been, by a corresponding superiority in the intelligence, morality, and general well-being of the people, we may venture, perhaps, to regard such apprehensions as groundless, and to consider the establishment of our republican empire as the opening of a new and more auspicious chapter in the history of man.

## CHAPTER VIII

Retirement of Henry from political and professional Life.—  
Domestic Occupations.—Death and Character.

THE proceedings detailed in the preceding chapter were the last of a political character in which Henry was engaged. It is understood that, on the retirement of Mr. Jefferson from the office of Secretary of State, Henry was requested to take charge of that department of the government; and it is rumored, that, at a later period, during the administration of John Adams, he was offered successively the appointments of Minister to France and to Spain. At the close of the year 1796, he was elected by the legislature Governor of the Commonwealth, but declined the office.

He seems to have taken no very decided part in the political controversies that grew up after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, but favored alternately the views of one or the other party, according to his own private opinion of the merits of the particular question upon which they were for the time divided. He disapproved Mr. Jay's treaty with Great Britain; but, after it had been ratified by the Senate and become constitutionally the law of the land, he deemed it the duty of every citizen to concur in carrying it into effect in his appropriate sphere of action, whether political or personal, and con-



demned the course of those members of the House of Representatives of the United States who endeavored to prevent the appropriation necessary for this purpose. He also publicly expressed his approbation of the Alien and Sedition Laws, and his disapprobation of the celebrated Kentucky and Virginia resolutions. So strong was his apprehension of danger to the public tranquillity from the policy which dictated these resolutions that it induced him to break the determination, which he had previously formed, to take no further part in the public affairs; and, in the Spring of the year 1799, he presented himself to the electors of Charlotte county in which he resided as a candidate for the State Assembly.

Although his avowed object, in seeking an election, was to oppose the views of a party which predominated throughout the State, his personal influence was so great that he was elected by his usual commanding majority. After his election was known, it was deemed by the republican leaders a matter of so much importance that great exertions were made to bring into the Assembly their most distinguished advocates, for the purpose of neutralizing his influence. Giles, Taylor of Caroline, Nicholas, and a number of younger men, conspicuous for talent and eloquence, were deputed to the Assembly. Madison himself retired from Congress, and accepted a place in the Virginia legislature for the purpose of encountering the great champion on his own ground. Had Henry taken his seat, it would have been a singular spectacle to see these distinguished men leading on, as before, their re-

spective parties, but each, so far as party connections were concerned, occupying a position directly opposite to that which he had held in the State Convention. The republican party had a large majority in the Assembly, and it is altogether probable that Henry would have found it as difficult to stem the torrent of public opinion on this occasion as he had on the preceding one; but the point was never brought to a practical issue. A disease, under which he had been suffering for two years, came to a crisis about the time of his election to the Assembly, and terminated fatally on the 6th of June, 1799.

At the new session of the Assembly, a member of the Federal party moved the following resolution:

“The General Assembly of Virginia, as a testimonial of their veneration for the character of their late illustrious fellow-citizen, Patrick Henry, whose unrivalled eloquence and superior talents were in times of peculiar peril and distress so uniformly, so powerfully and successfully, devoted to the cause of freedom and of his country; and, in order to incite the present and future generations to an imitation of his virtues, and an emulation of his fame;

“Resolve, That the Executive be authorized and requested to procure a marble bust of the said Patrick Henry, at the public expense, and to cause the same to be placed in one of the niches of the hall of the House of Delegates.”

The reception, which this motion met with in the Assembly affords a striking proof how completely, at periods of high party excitement, a difference of opinion on the current questions of the day is per-

mitted to outweigh every consideration of a more general character. The mover of the resolution, as well as the illustrious subject of it, was regarded by the majority, not merely as an opponent, but as an apostate; and, although every member would have doubtless concurred in the view taken of Henry's general character, and in the propriety of the measure recommended, the action on the resolutions was determined by a strictly party vote. A member of the majority moved to lay it on the table. The member who offered it replied with warmth that, if it were so disposed of, he would never call it up again. The motion to lay on the table prevailed, and the resolution was, in consequence, never acted on.

The charge of apostasy is habitually made in this and other countries, against all who take a course, in political or religious affairs, different from that pursued by a party with which they have habitually acted, and is generally intended to intimate a suspicion of corrupt or interested motives. In reality, a difference of this kind does not, in all cases, suppose even inconsistency in principle. The questions upon which parties are divided are continually changing; and, with the few who form opinions for themselves, it must be a matter of mere accident whether, in reasoning upon a new state of things, they come to the same conclusions which are drawn by others with whom they had agreed before upon a different subject.

In the present case, it might, perhaps, have appeared more natural that Henry, who had opposed the Federal Constitution, as tending too strongly to

concentrate power in the government, should have afterwards favored the strictest construction of that instrument; while, on the other hand, it may be thought singular that Madison, the great champion of a vigorous general government in the Federal and Virginia Conventions, should have insisted on the construction more favorable to State-rights and individual liberty. But, after all, the questions of the Alien and Sedition Laws, and of our relations with France, which formed the principal topics of party controversy at this period, were essentially different from that of the adoption or rejection of the Federal Constitution; and it is quite unnecessary, and of course uncharitable and unjust, to suppose that either of the two great Virginia statesmen was governed, in the course he pursued, by any other than the purest and most patriotic motives.

This is now universally acknowledged in the case of Mr. Madison, whose name and memory are equally respected by all parties; and it is presumed that the verdict of public opinion is not less favorable in regard to Henry. In neither case could there be the slightest pretence for the imputation of interested views; and both, in taking a course which necessarily exposed them to a good deal of temporary obloquy, evinced a moral courage in a high degree honorable to their general characters. In a letter to his daughter, Mrs. Aylett, written in 1796, Henry repels the idea of any change in his opinions upon the leading principles of political philosophy, and gives his reasons, founded on the merits of the particular cases, for differing from his former associates upon the

points then at issue. It is unnecessary, for the present purpose, to pursue the subject in any further detail.

After his retirement from political life, Henry continued for several years the practice of his laborious profession with undiminished reputation and success. In the class of cases which require or admit the dignity of eloquence he stood, by general acknowledgment, at the head of the bar, and though less familiar with the technical learning of the law than some others, yet, whenever the questions involved were of sufficient interest to engage his attention, he qualified himself for the occasion and maintained his usual undisputed preëminence. The celebrated case of the British debts, which he argued twice for two or three days in succession, was, perhaps, the most important in which he was engaged. A report of his second argument is given, at great length, by Mr. Wirt, from the notes of Robertson, the reporter of the debates in the Virginia Convention; and although, doubtless, (as every such report must necessarily be,) a very imperfect copy of the orator's language, it conveys the impression of the highest order of forensic ability. In 1794, he finally retired from professional life and, with the exception of the brief periods of political action already alluded to, passed his remaining years in the bosom of his family.

The steady pursuit of his profession, to which he had of late devoted himself, had supplied him with a competent fortune. By his two marriages he was the father of fifteen children, eleven of whom, with

his second wife, were living at his death. He thus enjoyed the highest satisfaction that can belong to the declining period of life in the society and affection of a numerous offspring. He retained, to the last, the cheerful and sportive temperament which formed, in youth, his most remarkable characteristic. He was frequently found by his visitors joining in the games of his little grandchildren, and entrancing them with the music of the same violin which had so often in his early days seduced him from the graver occupations of the counting-room. His love of conversation and society had always been intense; and being now relieved from care and business of every kind he gave himself up without restraint to this cherished passion. He was always surrounded by a circle of family connections and neighbors, including a constant succession of strangers from other States and foreign countries, who were attracted by his high reputation to visit him at his residence. In the court before his door there was a large walnut-tree under which he often passed his summer evenings and entertained his friends.

Imagination can present no brighter picture of a happy old age than is exhibited in the real life of Henry; and, when we compare this charming spectacle with that of the cares and privations which have clouded the closing years of some of our greatest Revolutionary patriots, we are forced to acknowledge that the strict private economy with which Henry has sometimes been reproached as a fault, when combined, as it was in his case, with a genial temperament and a liberal discharge of all the duties

of life, was not so much a venial error as an actual, positive, and most important virtue. He had been always strongly impressed with the importance of religion, and had studied with care the best books on the subject that came within his reach. In the year 1790, he published, at his own expense, for gratuitous distribution among the people, an edition of Soame Jenyns's "View of the Internal Evidences of Christianity." Among his favorite works were Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and Butler's "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed"; a selection not less honorable to his literary taste than to his religious character. In his last days he dwelt with augmented interest on these great subjects.

To a friend, who visited him not long before his death and found him engaged in reading the Bible, he remarked: "This is a book worth more than all the others that were ever printed. It is my misfortune not to have found time to read it with the proper attention and feeling till lately. I trust in the mercy of Heaven that it is not yet too late." It appears, from the language used on this occasion, and from other circumstances, that he inclined to what is popularly called the Orthodox view of Christianity; but he was entirely free from sectarian dogmatism, and did not even connect himself in form with any denomination of Christians. He had probably reached, by the power of his own instinctive sagacity, that higher view towards which the public mind is now struggling, without having yet fully attained it, which regards the points that divide the different



sects from each other as comparatively immaterial, and the essence of religion as residing in those that are common to them all.

In his person, Henry was tall and thin, with a slight stoop of the shoulders. His complexion was dark, and his face furrowed by deep lines of care and thought, which gave it a somewhat severe aspect. In his youth, he was rather inattentive to his dress; but in his later years, especially on public occasions, and while he occupied the executive chair, he paid, in this respect, a proper regard to the decorum required by his position in society. At the bar of the General Assembly he always appeared in a full suit of black cloth, or velvet, with a tie-wig dressed and powdered in the highest style of forensic fashion; and in the winter season he wore over his other apparel, in accordance with the usage of the time, an ample scarlet cloak. As he advanced in years, he also exchanged the rusticity of his youthful manners for a deportment distinguished by entire self-possession, and, on proper occasions, by an air of stateliness and elegance. He is represented, by those who have been present when he has entered the hall of the Assembly for the purpose of arguing some important case, as "saluting the House all round with a dignity, and even majesty, that would have done honor to the most polished courtier in Europe."

The leading traits in his intellectual and moral character have been often alluded to in the course of this narrative, and are shown too clearly in his practical life to require an elaborate recapitulation.

He possessed an instinctive sagacity, which supplied to a great extent the deficiencies of his education; a moral courage, which led him to spurn at all considerations of mere temporary expediency when he was once satisfied where the right lay, and a naturally noble and generous heart. To these latter qualities he owed his extraordinary efficiency and success as a public speaker. Eloquence no doubt supposes, in general, the natural gift of an easy, copious, and flowing utterance; but this is not a rare endowment, and when wholly or chiefly relied upon for effect is apt to tire, rather than convince or delight, an audience. It rises into eloquence only when it becomes the expression of powerful thought, and especially of deep feeling.

While the speaker only gratifies the ear with melodious tones and pleases the eye with graceful gestures, he is in some degree successful, but does not produce the highest possible effect. Nor does he reach the perfection of his art when he merely succeeds in convincing the judgment by a train of sound or plausible reasoning. It is only when he acts upon the moral part of our nature, by stirring and successful appeals to the passions, that he kindles enthusiasm, and becomes for the moment a sort of divinity. The power of producing such effects, of making such appeals with success, is itself in great measure the result of a naturally keen sensibility, which is accordingly represented by the greatest critic of antiquity as the foundation of excellence in public speaking. *Pectus est quod facit disertum*. But even this essential requisite is not

sufficient; for the orator must not only move and melt, but, on proper occasions, alarm, terrify, and subjugate his hearers. In order to succeed in this, he must possess the moral courage, the undaunted self-possession, the overwhelming energy of character, which enables him to point the artillery of his eloquence at its object, under all circumstances, and without regard to personal consequences.

In the possession, in a much higher degree than others, of these transcendent moral qualifications for success in oratory, lay the secret of the supremacy of Henry over his distinguished contemporaries and rivals, some of whom, as, for instance, Richard Henry Lee, were much above him in literary accomplishments and external graces of manner. In this lay the peculiar *charm*, which, by general acknowledgment, hung upon his lips, as it does upon those of every truly eloquent speaker, and which the hearer can only feel without being able to describe. Description, in fact, embraces only such particulars as meet the eye and ear; but the sympathy which rouses and inflames the moral part of our nature is a kind of magnetic impulse that passes from the heart of the speaker to that of his audience, eluding observation, and only recognized in its overwhelming results.

The language which forms the medium for the transmission of this impulse, and which is identical in its essence with the highest poetry, transcends, of course, the talent of the ordinary reporter. It can never be reduced to a permanent form, excepting when the orator himself combines with the requisites

of his own art the talent of a first-rate writer. To this rare combination of powers we owe the finished specimens which have come down to us of the eloquence of the two great orators of Greece and Rome. Chatham, the first of British speakers, either wanted the talent of writing, or did not exercise it in his own speeches; which correspond very imperfectly with the effects that we know to have attended their delivery. Henry, like him, had never cultivated, and rarely exercised, the art of writing; the reports of his speeches, while they furnish an outline of the argument, convey no image of the glowing language in which they were clothed, still less of the moral inspiration that chiefly gave them effect. They fall, of course, far below his fame; and it is, after all, on the faith of mere tradition, attested, however, by facts too numerous and of too public a character to leave it in any way doubtful that the present and future generations will acknowledge the justice of his claim to the proud title that has been given him, of the greatest orator of the New World.

LIFE OF  
MAJOR-GENERAL  
NATHANIEL GREENE

BY  
J. T. HEADLEY



## MAJOR-GEN. NATHANIEL GREENE

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His early Life.—Whipped by his Father.—Appointed Brigadier-General.—Is Sick during the Battle of Long Island.—Bravery at Brandywine, and Germantown, and Springfield.—Appointed over the Southern Army.—Battle of Cowpens.—His famous retreat through the Carolinas.—Battle of Guilford.—Battle of Hobkirk's Hill.—Turns fiercely on Cornwallis's Line of Posts.—Storming of Ninety-six.—Battle of Eutaw Springs.—Distress and Nakedness of his Army.—Triumphant Entrance into Charleston.—Removes South.—Death and Character.

It is pleasant to take up a character, the resplendent qualities of which are not darkened by serious defects. Arnold was adventurous and heroic, but he lacked principle—Lee, brilliant and brave, but too ambitious; while Greene possessed all their good qualities, with none of their bad ones. Poor, and without patrons, he began his career on the lowest steps of fame's ladder, and by his energy and effort alone, reached the highest—yet he never became dizzy by elevation, nor exhibited any of those weak or wicked passions power and rank so invariably develop.

NATHANIEL GREENE was born in Warwick, Rhode Island, May 27th, 1742, and hence was a young man at the breaking out of the Revolution. His father was a Quaker preacher; and young Na-



thaniel was early instructed in the principles of peace and universal brotherhood. To have seen him about on the farm, in his drab suit and broad-brimmed hat, or sitting meek and grave as a statue in one of those silent conventicles, one would never have picked him out for a major-general in the American army. His father owned a forge, and to this Nathaniel was finally promoted from the farm, and worked at the anvil with the same vigor he afterwards did in hammering out his own fortune. For awhile his youthful energy and ambition expended itself in athletic sports, such as wrestling, leaping, throwing the bar, and so forth, and in these none swung a more vigorous or steadier arm than he. He was very fond of dancing, which, of course, was looked upon by his sect with abhorrence. To have the son of a Quaker preacher the wildest in the frolic, and the merriest in all the dance, was a public scandal not to be tolerated a moment, and the most peremptory commands were laid on young Greene. The latter pretended to obey; but after his grave father was asleep he would often drop from his chamber window, and steal away to the scene of mirth. The suspicious parent, however, got wind of it in some way, and so, one night, when there was to be a large ball in the neighborhood, kept watch. Finding, late in the evening, that his son had gone, the old gentleman locked the door of the house, and, with a horsewhip in his hand, began to pace backwards and forwards under the window from which the culprit had escaped. The latter, returning home before daylight, saw through the gloom the figure of his father slowly moving to and

fro, and he knew what to expect. To wait at a distance till morning would lead to certain detection, and to enter the house without being discovered was impossible, and so, after holding a short council of war with himself over the matter, he determined to advance boldly and take the flogging prepared for him. But with that quick invention which afterwards served him so well on more important occasions, he slipped some shingles under his coat behind, to deaden the blows of the horsewhip, which he knew his stern father would wield with no baby hand. Having taken this wise precaution, he walked boldly up and took the castigation. The shingles, however, did their duty, much to the young culprit's gratification.

But his strong mind could not long be satisfied with these follies, and he soon became enamoured of books, and, whether in the field or at the forge, was ever found with one by his side. He took up Euclid by himself, and mastered its difficult problems without assistance. While his iron was heating, he would sit down, and with his soiled hands turn over the pages of the renowned geometer with delight. This and similar studies, gave to his mind a breadth and grasp which he never could have obtained in his ordinary occupations. All the pocket-money he could raise was spent in purchasing books, and he made toys or trinkets of various kinds which he disposed of for the same object. His craving mind, having once seized on books, it seemed impossible to satisfy it; and hence, at the age of twenty, he laid the basis of a powerful character. Abstemious—eating

but two meals a day, he devoted all his leisure hours to the cultivation of his mind, and the accumulation of knowledge, and before twenty-eight years old, had a library of two hundred and fifty volumes. In 1770 he was elected member of the General Assembly of the colony, and entered at once with all the ardor of his nature into the contest which had commenced between the colonies and the parent country. He was soon convinced that the battle-field must decide the question, and, casting aside all his Quaker prejudices, resolved to draw his sword for freedom. He immediately plunged into the intricacies of military science, and eagerly devoured every book relating to the subject on which he could lay his hands. Bold and decided, he made no concealment of his determination: and the sect to which he belonged, unable, of course, to overlook this violation of their rules, called him to account. But neither persuasions nor threats could change the young Quaker's purpose, and he was cut off from the society. His drab coat and broad-brimmed hat were now thrown to the winds; and with his musket on his shoulder, he entered, as a private, one of the many independent companies then everywhere forming.

In the year 1774 he was married; but not even the attractions of his young bride could restrain him from the scene of danger. The next year the battles of Lexington and Concord were fought, and the rattling of arms was heard the length and breadth of the land, as the entire nation rose to defend its hearth-stones. Greene immediately started for Boston. In the organization of an army, which fol-

lowed, Rhode Island voted to raise a force of sixteen hundred men, and appointed Greene major-general.

After the battle of Bunker Hill, he joined the army at Cambridge. Congress, in appointing the officers of the continental army, was compelled in some cases to change the rank held by the provincial commanders; and Greene, under the new arrangement, sunk to brigadier-general. He immediately entered upon a course of discipline, the effect of which was soon apparent in the troops under his command. This habit formed at the outset, was of great use to him ever afterwards.

He seems, also, to have studied more deeply than many others the character of the quarrel between the two countries, and his strong mind to have forecast the necessity of a more decisive step than the mere redress of grievances; for, from his camp at Prospect Hill, he writes to a member of Congress, saying, "Permit me to recommend, from the sincerity of a heart at all times ready to bleed in my country's cause, a *declaration of independence, and call upon the world, and the great God who governs it, to witness the necessity, propriety, and rectitude thereof.*"

He early won the confidence and esteem of Washington, and the latter sent him in the Spring to occupy Long Island with his brigade. He entered on his work with ardor—examined the ground, established his posts, and made all the preparations in his power, to give the enemy a warm reception. But at this critical juncture, he was seized with a bilious fever, which laid him on his back, and for a while seriously threatened his life. It was thus Putnam

became placed over his troops, who, from his ignorance of the ground, and unpreparedness every way, suffered that defeat, which, but for the promptness and energy, generalship and skill of Washington, would have proved fatal to the whole army. One can imagine what a brave man like Greene must have felt, in being compelled to lie idle in such an important crisis. Just as his career was opening, and after all the labor and drudgery had been gone through, to be thrown aside as a useless thing, was a most bitter disappointment. Besides, the fate of his brave troops, of which he had become so fond and so proud, might rest on the manner in which they were led into action. From his sick bed he heard the thunder of the first cannon, as it shook the house in which he lay helpless, and half-rising from his feverish couch, he exclaimed, "*Gracious God, to be confined at such a time!*" His brave heart was wrung with such sorrow as only heroes know, and as the uproar of the combat increased, his agitation became intense. Explosion after explosion shook his bed, and his eager inquiries as to the fate of the battle, could brook no delay. At last, when told that his favorite regiment—that of Swallow—had been terribly handled and cut to pieces, he could contain himself no longer, but burst into an agony of tears.

In the meantime, he had been promoted to the rank of major-general. As soon as he could sit his horse, he took the field, and was present at the battle of Harlaem Heights. The capture of the garrison of Fort Washington, was owing chiefly to Greene's want of judgment, who insisted on holding it against

the enemy. He always contended, however, that his views in the case were correct, and that had the troops proved sufficiently brave, the fort could not have been taken. He was beside Washington in his memorable retreat through the Jerseys, and in the brilliant movement upon Trenton, commanded the division which the latter accompanied in person. In that fearful night and fearful passage, he exhibited the coolness and stern resolution which afterwards so characterized him. He was with him also in the march on Princeton, and led his battalions to the charge with incredible fury. In these desperate encounters, the young Quaker had taken severe lessons in the art of war, while the heroism and personal exposure of the commander-in-chief had shown him how a general should behave in the moment of peril. He gazed in admiration on him, as he rode amid the guns through the gloom and storm towards Trenton, and saw, with unbounded delight, that tall form spur into the deadly volleys at Princeton. His heart fastened at once on his glorious leader, and amid all the dangers and conspiracies that afterwards shook so terribly the integrity of many of the officers, his love and faithfulness never faltered.

When the army went into winter-quarters at Morristown, he was despatched to Congress to push that dilatory body to an immediate re-organization of the forces. He afterwards was sent to examine the passes of the Highlands; but Spring found him again at his post. At the battle of Brandywine—the finale to the manœuvres that had been performed all summer, he exhibited that decision, and power over his

soldiers, which rendered him such a dreaded antagonist. At the commencement of the action he had been stationed far in the rear, as a reserve, to co-operate with any portion of the army which needed him most. But when the flight commenced, he hastened up, and marching his men *four miles in forty-nine minutes*, met the terrified disordered army. Untouched by the panic and terror around them, his brave troops wheeled sternly in front of the pursuing, shouting enemy. As the throng of fugitives came pouring on them, the ranks would open and let them pass, then close again, as the turbulent stream rolled away over the field. Thus opening and shutting his steady ranks, and slowly retreating, Greene at length cleared himself of the shattered army, and reaching a narrow defile, made a bold stand. Encouraging his little band, by voice and gesture, he held it to the shock for three-quarters of an hour. His firm front and steady volleys repelled every effort—and at length, as darkness shut in the scene, the enemy withdrew, and he hastened up to the main army. The conduct of his troops on this occasion, in thus withstanding the panic around them, and steadily holding in check the entire British force, was worthy the veteran armies of Europe.

In the battle of Germantown, which followed, he commanded the left wing, and did all that could be done to save the battle. In the retreat the gunners forsook their pieces, and he, after trying in vain to rally them, made them take hold of hands, and thus drag the artillery off. During this year he was appointed quartermaster-general, and his energy and



industry soon wrought a wonderful change in this hitherto neglected department of the army. The next winter his home was a log hut at Valley Forge. At the battle of Monmouth, which opened the summer campaign, he commanded the right wing, and brought his troops nobly into action. His heavy guns sent disorder through the advancing lines, and gave double power to Wayne's charge on the centre. In July he was sent to Rhode Island to co-operate with Lafayette and Sullivan in the projected descent on Newport, and covered that skilful retreat which saved the army.

In the discharge of his duties as quartermaster-general, he had exhibited not only his energy and skill, but also the noblest moral qualities, in bearing up against suspicion and hate and slander, and generously sinking his own feelings and reputation in the general good. But at length Congress made his department so odious to the people that he determined to resign. Washington, however, persuaded him to remain until he could present a plan to the government which, if accepted, would put his department on a proper footing. The plan, instead of being adopted, was mutilated and sent back, and Greene resigned. The letter conveying his resignation was, both in its manner and spirit, a stern and severe condemnation of the conduct of Congress; and that body, swayed by passion and faction more than by judgment and patriotism, instantly proposed to dismiss him from the service altogether. A fierce discussion ensued, and the friends of Greene could scarcely check the torrent of wrath that was about

to roll on his head. Washington heard of it, and wrote letters of earnest entreaty and solemn warning, telling those factious members to beware how they touched one so necessary to the country, and so beloved by the soldiers. Better counsels finally prevailed, and Greene's resignation was received without any reference to his rank in the line.

During the year 1780 occurred his heroic defence at Springfield, New Jersey. Washington, fearing the enemy was about to make a demonstration on West Point, moved towards the Hudson, leaving Greene, with only thirteen hundred men at Springfield. Here the latter received intelligence that Sir Henry Clinton, with five thousand British troops, had landed at Elizabethtown, and was marching against him. With his little band drawn up on the western bank of the Rahway, he coolly waited their approach. His first position was by the bridges, and his second on the heights in the rear. Soon the advancing columns emerged into view, and as they came within range, opened their artillery, and a fierce cannonade was kept up for two hours. Finding all attempts to dislodge our troops with the artillery fruitless, the infantry were ordered to advance, and soon opened their fire. Our men withstood gallantly for a while this overwhelming force; and when at length they were compelled to retreat, did so in perfect order, and slowly fell back to their second position. Here Greene waited anxiously for a second struggle; but Clinton wisely forbore, and returning to the village, commenced the nobler work of burning it to the ground. Having accomplished this feat,

he rapidly retreated, lest Washington should turn upon him.

In the fall of this year, when the treason of Arnold sent consternation through the country, Greene was in command of the army—Washington being at the time absent on a journey to Hartford, to confer with the French commanders. On him fell the painful duty of presiding at the court-martial which tried and condemned André. West Point was immediately put under his command; but scarcely had he entered upon his duties before he was called to the South, to repair the ruin wrought by Gates's terrible defeat at Camden. Although he had now been five years in service without any interval of repose, and his property was wasting away through want of his supervision, and his strong constitution was shattered by constant exposure, he hastened without delay to the new field of his labor.

From this point commences the real history of Greene. Intrusted with a separate command, at a distance from the commander-in-chief and Congress, and surrounded by all the difficulties that try men most, the resources of his powerful mind, and his amazing energies, began to develop themselves. He had hitherto been an able and efficient under-officer; he was now to show that he possessed the higher qualities necessary to conduct a long and arduous campaign to a successful issue. But the obstacles that met him on the threshold, were enough to daunt even a more resolute heart than his. Gates's overthrow had left everything in the worst possible state; so that he was hurled into a perfect chaos, and ex-

pected to bring order out of confusion, and strength out of weakness. Without money, without stores, without anything necessary to carry on a campaign, he joined his army, which, all counted, could not muster two thousand men. Destitute of clothing, of arms and ammunition, tattered, half-starved and dispirited, covered with every and any article they could lay hands on, they presented the appearance of a motley crowd, rather than of a well-appointed and organized force. Out of the whole he could muster but eight hundred men fit for service. With these—an empty magazine—no provisions, and a few pieces of cannon, he was expected to make head against Cornwallis, with a well-disciplined and powerful army at his back. True, there were some cheering features to this otherwise hopeless prospect—the officers under his command were as brave men as ever drew sword in battle. There was Morgan, a host in himself—Lee, with his fierce legion—Marion, with his trusty partisans—the gallant Sumpter; the headlong and fiery-hearted Washington, with his cavalry; forming a group of leaders to which the British army could furnish no parallel.

Greene's first step was to locate his troops where he could be safe from attack, until he could drill them, and obtain the necessary reinforcements to take the field. This was no easy task; for the British army, then lying at Winnsborough, flanked by strong garrisons, was on the alert, and ready at any moment to fall on their weak adversary, and crush him at a single blow. Relying on himself alone, Greene called no council of war, and commenced at once that deep

and daring game, which baffled all the efforts of Cornwallis to fathom. Selecting a strong post on the frontiers of South Carolina for the main army, he sent Morgan with a few hundred troops to hover about the enemy, and strike wherever an opportunity offered. This division of his forces, already too weak, has been condemned by some, as a violation of the rules of military art; and so it would have been under ordinary circumstances. The smaller the force the greater the concentration, is a rule which in active warfare it will not do to violate. But Greene wanted *time*—delay was of vital importance to him, and this he could not expect with his army located in one place, and constantly exposed to the attack of a superior enemy. He divided his forces, not so much to give strength to his own operations, as to bewilder his antagonist; and it had the desired effect. Cornwallis scarcely knew which way to turn, or where his wary adversary was about to strike, and hence divided his own forces. Had he known the situation and plans of Greene, he might easily have destroyed him, by marching his entire army first upon one, and then upon the other detachment of the Americans. But Greene had calculated wisely; his adversary was thrown into perturbation as he discovered Lee, Marion, and Morgan, hanging threateningly on his flanks.

#### BATTLE OF COWPENS

But Cornwallis at length saw the error he had been led into, and immediately concentrating his troops, moved forward upon Morgan. Tarleton, with eleven

hundred men, was ordered to meet him in front, while he himself, with the main part of the army, would cut off his retreat. Morgan, with less than a thousand men, immediately began to retire; but Tarleton, with his accustomed vigor, pressed him so hard, that when he came to Broad River he dared not attempt the passage, and so resolved to make a desperate stand where he was. He divided his troops into two portions, one in the open field, and the other behind it in the wood. Tarleton formed his men into two lines, with the artillery in the centre, and the cavalry on either flank. In this order they moved forward to the attack. After a single fire the first American line gave way, and the victorious enemy, with loud huzzas, pressed forward upon the second. Here, however, they met with a stern resistance, and the close volleys of the Americans made terrible havoc. Tarleton seeing this, hurried up a part of his second line, and, at the same time, ordered his cavalry to charge the right. This double movement was completely successful, and the victorious British swept the field with deafening shouts. In this critical moment, Washington, who had calmly sat and watched every movement, ordered his bugler to sound the charge, and placing himself at the head of his squadron, shouted them to follow. With their sabres shaking above their heads, they burst in a headlong gallop upon the astonished infantry. Through and through their broken ranks they rode, scattering them like a whirlwind from their path. The British cavalry rolled back in confusion before the fierce onset, and the battle was restored. This

gave time to Morgan to rally his infantry.\* With his sword flashing above his head, and his tremendous voice ringing over the din of arms, he moved amid his disordered troops, and at length, by commands and threats, and the most prodigious efforts, rallied them to the charge, and moving at their head, poured them in one wild torrent on the enemy. The shock of those thousand men was tremendous; and the English army stopped, and quivered a moment before it, then broke and fled in wild confusion, trampled down at every step by Washington's cavalry. Out of the eleven hundred men Tarleton led into battle, he saved but four hundred. Two cannon, eight hundred muskets, a hundred dragoon-horses, and tents and ammunition, were the fruits of this victory.

Scarcely had the roar of battle ceased before Morgan began to retreat. He knew Cornwallis, with a powerful army, was close upon him, and an hour's delay might lose him all the fruits of his gallant achievement. The British commander strained every nerve to cut him off, and recover the spoils and prisoners that had been taken. But with such vigor had Morgan pushed his retreat, that his adversary was unable to overtake him, and came up to the Catawba just in time to see the last of the rear-guard form on the opposite shore. Still it was possible to reach him before he could effect a junction with Greene, and he resolved to spare no sacrifice to secure

\* Howard and Pinckney wrought prodigies—making the militia charge bayonet like old veterans. The former had at one time five swords of officers who had surrendered, in his hands.



this result. He immediately ordered the baggage of the army to be destroyed, so that it could move rapidly and without encumbrance. Liquor casks were staved in before the soldiers—wagons consumed, and all those things which go to make up the little comforts of a camp committed to the flames. Cornwallis set the example—and beginning with his own baggage, the destruction continued till it reached the last private. It took two days to complete it—and then, stripped like a wrestler for the struggle, the British general moved forward. But Greene, with only a single aid, and a sergeant's guard of dragoons, had left the main army, and pressed forward a hundred and fifty miles to succor Morgan. The victors of Cowpens received him with acclamations as he rode into camp. With him at their head they feared nothing, and joyfully entered on the race with their adversary.

#### SKILFUL RETREAT THROUGH THE CAROLINAS

Greene had ordered the main army to rendezvous at Guilford, and thither he now directed his steps, closely watched by Cornwallis.

To understand the ground over which this remarkable retreat was performed, it is necessary only to glance at a map. Three large rivers rise in the north-west parts of South and North Carolina, and flow in a south-easterly direction into the Atlantic. The lower, or more southern one, is the Catawba, which empties into the Santee. The next, north of it, and nearly parallel, is the Yadkin, emptying into the

Pedee. The last, and more northern, is the Dan, which soon leaves its south-easterly direction, and winds backwards and forwards across the Virginia line, and finally falls into the Roanoke. Greene was now on the Catawba, or most southern river, and directed his steps north—his line of progress cutting the Yadkin and Dan. To place a deep river between two armies effectually separates them for some time, while a retreating army between one and a powerful adversary, is almost sure to be ruined. Therefore, the great effort of Cornwallis was to overtake his weak enemy somewhere between the rivers, while the latter strained every nerve to keep a deep stream dividing him and his foe. Greene was now across the Catawba, which, swollen by the recent rains, prevented Cornwallis from crossing. But at length it began to subside, and the latter determined, by a night-march to a private ford near Salisbury to deceive his antagonist, and cross without opposition. But Greene had been on the alert, and stationed a body of militia there to dispute the passage. At day-break, the British column was seen silently approaching the river. A deep hush was on everything, broken only by the roar of the swollen waters, and not a living thing was to be seen on the shore. Twilight still rested on the forest, and the turbid foam-covered stream looked doubly appalling in the gloom. The rain was falling in torrents, and the British commander, as he reined up his steed on the slippery banks, looked long and anxiously on the farther side. There all was wild and silent; but faint flashes of the American fires, in the woods, told too well that he

had been forestalled. Still, the order to advance was given, and the column boldly entered the channel. With muskets poised above their heads to keep them dry, and leaning against each other, to steady their slippery footing, the grenadiers pushed forward. As they advanced the water deepened, until it flowed in a strong, swift current, up to their waists. The cavalry went plunging through, but the rapid stream bore many of them, both horses and riders, downward in the darkness. The head of the column had already reached the centre of the river, when the voices of the sentinels rung through the darkness, and the next moment their guns flashed through the storm. The Americans, five hundred in number, immediately poured in a destructive volley, but the British troops pressed steadily forward. Soldier after soldier rolled over in the flood, and Cornwallis's horse was shot under him; but the noble animal, with a desperate effort, carried his rider to the bank before he fell. The intrepid troops at length reached the shore, and routed the militia. Cornwallis was now on the same side of the river with his antagonist, and prepared to follow up his advantage with vigor. But the latter no sooner heard that the enemy had passed the Catawba, than he ordered the retreat to the Yadkin. Through the drenching rain and deep mud, scarcely halting to eat or rest, the ragged troops dragged their weary way, and on the third day reached the river, and commenced crossing. In the meantime, the recent rains had swollen this river also, so that by the time Greene had safely effected the passage, the current was foaming by on a level

with its banks. He had urged everything forward with the utmost speed, and at midnight, just as the last of the rear-guard were embarking, they were saluted with a volley from the advanced guard of the British. When the morning light broke over the scene, there lay the two armies within sight of each other, and the blessed Yadkin surging and roaring in threatening accents between, as if on purpose to daunt the invaders from its bosom. Stung into madness at this second escape of their enemy, the English lined the shore with artillery, and opened a fierce cannonade on the American camp. But the army, protected by an elevated ridge, rested quietly and safely behind it. In a little cabin, just showing its roof above the rocks, Greene took up his quarters, and while his troops were reposing, commenced writing his despatches. The enemy suspecting the American general had established himself there, directed his artillery upon it, and soon the rocks rung with the balls that smoked and bounded from their sides. It was not long before the roof of the cabin was struck, and the shingles and clapboards began to fly about in every direction—but the stern warrior within never once looked up, and wrote on as calmly as if in his peaceful home.

Four days the British general tarried on the shores of the Yadkin, and then, as the waters subsided, again put his army in motion. Moving lower down the river, he crossed over, and started anew after his adversary. But the latter, ever vigilant, was already on his march for Guilford, where he resolved to make a stand, and strike this bold Briton to the heart. But

on reaching Guilford, he learned, to his dismay, that the reinforcements promised him had not arrived. The English army was nearly double that of his own, and all well-trying, disciplined soldiers; and he knew it would be madness to give battle on such disadvantageous terms. There was, therefore, no remedy but retreat, and this had now become a difficult matter. In the hope of being able to sustain himself at Guilford, he had suffered his enemy to approach so near, and block him in so effectually, that there was but one possible way of escape. Cornwallis at last deemed his prey secure.

On the 10th of February, this battle of manœuvres again commenced, and the two armies, now only twenty-five miles apart, stretched forward. Cornwallis supposed his adversary would make for the upper fords of the Dan, as there was nothing but ferries below, and hence put his army in such a position that he could crush him at once; but Greene quietly withdrew towards the Lower Dan, where he ordered boats to be congregated, in which he could transport his troops over. His object in this was twofold; first, to place a deep instead of a fordable river between him and his formidable adversary, and secondly, to be in a situation to effect a junction with the reinforcements he expected from Virginia. Discovering at once the error under which Cornwallis labored, he added to it by sending a large detachment to manœuvre in front, as if the upper fords were indeed the object of his efforts. Colonel Williams commanded this chosen body of men, and marched boldly against the entire English army.

The British commander, thinking it to be the advanced guard of the Americans, began hastily to contract his lines, and make preparations for a fierce resistance. This detained his march, and allowed Greene to get a start, without which he must inevitably have been lost. The English were without baggage; indeed, the whole army had been converted into light infantry, which enabled it to move with much more alacrity than that of the Americans. It was now the dead of winter—the roads to-day were filled deep with mud, and to-morrow frozen hard, presenting a mass of rugged points to the soldiers' feet, through which or over which they were compelled to drag themselves, urged on by the fear of destruction. In the meantime Cornwallis, apprised of his error, began the pursuit in good earnest. But that gallant rear-guard of Williams kept between the two armies, slowly retreating, but still present—ever bending like a brow of wrath on the advancing enemy. The fate of the American army rested on its firmness and skill, and every officer in it seemed to feel the immense trust committed to his care. There were Lee's gallant legion, and Washington's heavy mounted, desperate horsemen, heroes every one. Vigilant, untiring, brave, they hovered with such a threatening aspect around the advancing columns, that they were compelled to march in close order to prevent an attack. The least negligence, the least oversight, and the blow would fall like lightning. Never did a rear-guard behave more gallantly. The men were allowed only three hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, and but one meal a day. By starting

and pushing forward three hours before daylight, they were enabled to get a breakfast, and this was the last repast till next morning. Yet the brave fellows bore all without a murmur; and night after night, and day after day, presented the same determined front to the enemy. Cornwallis, believing for awhile that he had the whole American force in front, rejoiced in its proximity, knowing that when it reached the river it must perish—then Virginia would lie open to his victorious arms, and the whole South be prostrate. But when he at length discovered his mistake, he strained forward with desperate efforts.

In the meanwhile, that fleeing army presented a most heart-rending spectacle. Half clad, and many of them barefoot, with only one blanket for every four men, they toiled through the mire, or left their blood on the frozen ground—pressing on through the wintry storm and cold winds in the desperate struggle for life. At night when they snatched a few moments' repose, three soldiers would stretch themselves on the damp ground under one blanket, and the fourth keep watch: and happy were those who had even this scanty covering. Over hills, through forests, across streams, they held their anxious way, drenched by the rains, and chilled by the water through which they waded—and, unprotected and uncovered, were compelled to dry their clothes by the heat of their own bodies. Greene saw their distress with bitter grief, but it could not be helped—his cheering words and bright example were all he could give them. Now hurrying along his



exhausted columns, and now anxiously listening to hear the sound of the enemy's guns in the distance, he became a prey to the most wasting anxiety. From the time he had set out for the camp of Morgan, on the banks of the Catawba, he had not taken off his clothes; while not an officer in the army was earlier in the saddle, or later out of it, than he. But undismayed—his strong soul fully resolved yet to conquer—he surveyed with a calm, stern eye, the dangers that thickened around him. Should the rear-guard fail, nothing but a miracle could save him—but it should *not* fail. Every deep-laid plan was thwarted, every surprise disconcerted, and every sudden movement to crush it eluded by its tireless, sleepless leaders. Often within musket-shot of the enemy's vanguard, the excited soldiers wished to return the fire; but the stern orders to desist were obeyed, and the two tired armies toiled on. It was a fearful race for life, and right nobly was it run.

At length the main army arrived within forty miles of the ferry-boats which were to place a deep river between them and the foe, and hope quickened every step. All night long they swept onward through the gloom, cheered by the thought that another day would place the object for which they struggled within their grasp. On that same cold and slippery night the noble rear-guard, slowly retreating, suddenly saw, at twelve o'clock, watch-fires blazing in the distance. There then lay the army, for which they had struggled so nobly and suffered so much, overtaken at last, and sure to fall. In this fearful crisis, that gallant band paused and held a

short consultation; and then resolved, with one accord, to throw themselves in an overwhelming charge on the English army, and rolling it back on itself, by a sacrifice as great as it was glorious, secure a few more hours of safety to those they were protecting. This noble devotion was spared such a trial; the fires were indeed those kindled by Greene's soldiers, but the tired columns had departed, and staggering from want of repose and food, were now stretching forward through the midnight, miles in advance. Cornwallis, when he arrived at the smouldering campfires, believed himself almost up with Greene, and allowing his troops but a few moments' repose, marched all night long. In the morning his van was close upon the rear of that firm guard. Now came the last prodigious effort of the British commander—that rear-guard must fall, and with it, Greene, or all his labor and sacrifice would be in vain. On the banks of the Dan he had resolved to bury the American army, and if human effort and human energy could effect it, it should be done. His steady columns closed more threateningly and rapidly on the guard, pushing it fiercely before them, and scorning all meaner success, pressed forward for the greater prize. Still Lee's intrepid legion, and Washington's fearless horsemen, hung black and wrathful around their path, striving desperately, but in vain, to check their rapid advance. On, on, like racers approaching the goal, they swept over the open country, driving everything before them.

But at noon a single horseman was seen coming, in a swift gallop, up the road along which Greene

had lately passed. Every eye watched him as he approached, and as he reined his panting steed up beside the officers of that exhausted, but still resolute band, and exclaimed, "*The army is over the river,*" a loud huzza rent the air.

The main portion of the guard was now hastily despatched by the shortest route to the ferry, while Lee still hovered with his legion in front of Cornwallis. As the former approached the river, they saw Greene, wan and haggard, standing on the shore, and gazing anxiously up the road by which they were expected to appear. His army was over, but he had remained behind to learn the fate of that noble guard, and if necessary, to fly to its relief. His eye lightened with exultation, as he saw the column rush forward to the river with shouts which were echoed in deafening accents from the opposite shore. It was now dark, and the troops were crowded with the utmost despatch into the boats, and hastened over. Scarcely were they safely landed, before the banks shook beneath the hurried heavy tramp of Lee's legion, as it came thundering on towards the ferry. The next moment the shores rung with the clatter of armor, as those bold riders dismounted, and leaped into the boats ready to receive them. Their horses were pushed into the water after them, and the black mass disappeared in the gloom. In a few moments, lights dancing along the farther shore told of their safe arrival, and a shout that made the welkin ring went up from the American camp. Lee was the last man that embarked; he would not stir till his brave dragoons were all safe; and as the boat

that bore him touched the shore, the tread of the British van echoed along the banks he had just left. The pursuing columns closed rapidly in towards the river, but the prey they thought within their grasp had escaped. Not a boat was left behind, and Cornwallis saw with the keenest anguish, a deep broad river rolling between him and his foe. It was a bitter disappointment; his baggage had all been destroyed in vain, and this terrible march of two hundred and fifty miles made only to be retraced.

But no pen can describe the joy and exultation that reigned in the American camp that night. The army received that gallant rear-guard with open arms, and hailed them as their deliverers. Forgot was all—their lacerated feet, and stiffened limbs, and empty stomachs, and scanty clothing—and even the wintry wind swept by unheeded in the joy of their escape. Together they sat down and recounted their toils, and asked, each of the other, his perils and hardships by the way. Laughter, and mirth, and songs, and all the reckless gayety of a camp from which restraint is taken, made the shores echo. But it was with sterner pleasure Greene contemplated his escape; and as he looked on the majestic river, rolling its broad, deep current onward in the star-light, a mountain seemed to lift from his heart. He listened to the boisterous mirth about him, only to rejoice that so many brave fellows had been snatched from the enemy; then turned to his tent to ponder on his position, and resolve what next to do.

Thus ended this glorious retreat. It had been conducted for two hundred and fifty miles, through a

country not furnishing a single defile in which a stand could be made. Three large rivers had been crossed—forests traversed—and through rain and mud, and over frost and ice, Greene had fled for twenty days, baffling every attempt of his more powerful antagonist to force him to a decisive action. For the skill in which it was planned, the resolution and energy with which it was carried through, and the distance traversed, it stands alone in the annals of our country, and will bear comparison with the most renowned feats of ancient or modern times. It covered Greene with more glory than a victory could have done, and stamped him at once the great commander.

Cornwallis, far from his reinforcements, and in the heart of a hostile country, was now in a critical state. Greene no sooner saw his enemy halt, than he prepared to act on the offensive; and if the reinforcements promised by Virginia had been ready, he could easily have crushed him. His letters dated at this time, show how his heart was wrung at the obstacles thrown in his way. Bold and self-reliant, however, he did not give way to despondency; but the moment Cornwallis began to retreat, threw out his light troops in every direction, in order to harass his movements; and in five days himself crossed the Dan, and proceeded to a place between Troublesome Creek and Reedy Fork, where he established his camp. In the meantime, the British commander found himself surrounded by a cloud of republicans, who were incessantly driving in his pickets, beating up his quarters, and keeping his camp in a constant trepidation.

Tarleton, sent out with fire and sword, was compelled precipitately to retrace his steps, followed fiercely by Lee and Pickens, whose troops, in their ardor, marched all night, guiding their steps through the gloom by pine torches, and nearly succeeded in capturing him.

Cornwallis, to whom a decisive battle had become a matter of life and death, immediately started in pursuit of Greene; hoping to fall on him before his army, now rapidly swelling by reinforcements, should become too formidable to assail. But manœuvre baffled manœuvre, and the wily American turned and doubled on his adversary in such a way as completely foiled all his plans. He changed his camp every night, filling the Tories with alarm by his omnipresent army, while his light troops, imitating his example, were never to be found in the same place for two days together. Cornwallis labored like one in a dream, and knew not in what direction to expect the blow that seemed ever ready to fall. One day he would be told that his enemy was in front; but before he had advanced far, he would hear of him on his flanks, and again back to his old quarters. His light troops were worn out with constant exertions, his foraging parties cut off, and he was gradually wearing away; while his adversary, whose sleepless eye never for a moment lost sight of him, was gradually augmenting his forces. Never before had he found an enemy so difficult to deal with; and there seemed no end to the web in which it was sought to entangle him. At length, however, hearing that a large body of reinforce-

ments was coming up in a certain direction, he immediately resolved to throw himself between them and Greene, and thus force him to a battle or to abandon his allies. But the American commander understood his designs before they were put in execution, and by a skilful manœuvre saved the reinforcements; while, to make the chagrin of Cornwallis still more galling, they just slipped through his fingers. Other reinforcements now arriving from Virginia, Greene saw his army swell to five thousand five hundred men. This was larger, numerically, than the force opposed to him; but most of them were raw recruits. Still, he determined with these to risk a battle, for he knew that it was the largest army he could hope to raise, and that he could not long hold even this number together. For two months in the heart of winter he had kept manœuvring, marching, and countermarching, retreating and advancing, until the time had come for striking a blow or abandoning the attempt forever. He might not win the victory, but he would cripple his adversary, so that he would be compelled to quit the field. With these views and this determination, he gave his troops a little repose, and his raw recruits a little discipline, and then started for Guilford Court House. Cornwallis, after his last attempt to cut off the American reinforcements, had retired, so that Greene's march was unobstructed.

#### BATTLE OF GUILFORD

On the 14th of March he halted his army at Guilford, where he had formerly examined the ground,



with the intention of making it, some day, a battle-field. The solitary building, called the court-house, stood on a hill in the centre of a small clearing. It was a lonely spot, not another house was in sight; and a limitless forest stretched away on every side, broken only here and there by a patch of cultivated ground, which some adventurous settler had made. In front of the building was a belt of forest, and beyond it and parallel to it a long narrow cornfield. Along the farther edge of the field ran a rivulet. The road passed by the court-house through the belt of forest, and across the centre of the cornfield, and finally lost itself in the woods beyond, from which the enemy were to emerge. On the morning of the 15th of March, 1781, the drums beat their reveille early, and Greene drew up his men in three lines on this secluded spot, which, before night, was to be strewn with the dead. Along the edge of the piece of wood, behind a fence, and facing the cornfield, he placed the North Carolina militia. In the wood, about fifty rods in the rear, he stationed the Virginia militia, under Stevens and Lawson; both these lines extended across the road. Four hundred yards behind these, on the hill around the court-house, were ranged the brave continentals, commanded by Greene in person. Two roads leading away from the court-house, in the rear, furnished a secure retreat. Thus strongly posted, with Lee's legion and some infantry covering the left flank, and Washington's heavy mounted dragoons the right, he waited the approach of the enemy.

It was a clear bright day as ever blessed the

earth; the bracing air just stirred the tree-tops over the soldiers' heads, and all was beautiful and spring-like. Early in the forenoon scouts returned with the news that the British were advancing, and that gallant army stood to arms, and looked long and eagerly down the road along which they were to come. Noon came, and still the forest was silent and slumberous. But at length, about one o'clock, strains of martial music were heard in the distance, struggling up from the tree-tops, and soon the sharp rattle of the drum, and the shrill tones of the fife and horn broke with startling distinctness on the ear, and then the head of the column began slowly to emerge into view. Two pieces of artillery under Singleton had been advanced along the road, and now opened on the approaching mass. Cornwallis immediately brought forward his artillery, and a fierce cannonade commenced. Under cover of the smoke of his guns, he pushed his columns across the brook into the cornfield, where, deploying rapidly to the right and left, they formed in order of battle. Relying on the discipline of his troops, he formed them into a single line, without any reserve, resolved, by one terrible onset, to sweep the field. The Carolina militia looked in terror over the cornfield before them, red with the scarlet uniforms. The steady tread of the advancing battalions, the long lines of light made by the glittering bayonets over their heads, the banners floating in the breeze, and the loud strains of martial music, drowned ever and anon by the roar of cannon, conspired to render it a scene that might awe even more veteran hearts.

On, on they came, with the terrible front of battle, unchecked by the distant random shots of some of the militia, until they approached within a few rods, when they halted, and, at the word of command, poured in a simultaneous volley—then throwing their bayonets forward, rushed, with loud shouts, to the charge. The poor militia, frightened half out of their senses by this sudden and awful onset, forgot, many of them, to fire at all, and dropping their guns, knapsacks, canteens and everything, took to their heels like a flock of sheep. Greene had not calculated on their firing more than four or five rounds; but this was dastardly. Their officers strove bravely to rally them, seizing those nearest with their hands, entreating and threatening by turns, while Lee spurred among them with his drawn sabre, swearing he would ride them down with his terrible legion if they did not halt. It was all in vain, utter terror had seized them; and they swarmed in affright through the woods, back to the second line. The Virginians, untouched by the panic, taunted them as they fled through, and railed on them as cowards and poltroons; then bravely turned to meet the shock. Stevens had taken care his militia should not serve him as they did at Camden, and posted forty riflemen in the rear, with orders to shoot down the first man who should attempt to run.

The British, elated by their first success, sent up a loud huzza, and pressed furiously forward upon the second line. In a moment the woods were red with the scarlet uniforms as they swept, in one broad wave, up to the Virginians; but a deadly volley re-

ceived them, and huge gaps opened in their files. Unable to stand this galling fire, they sprang forward with the bayonet, and with levelled pieces, and steady front, moved against the undisciplined militia—but not a rank broke, not a battalion fled. Opposing steel to steel, and in the intervals pouring in their rapid volleys, they held, for a long time, the whole British army in check. At length, however, forced back by superior numbers, the right wing, still hanging together, swung slowly round, on the centre as a pivot, until it reached the road, then broke and fled. The left wing, in the woods, on the opposite side of the road, still maintained the combat. Greene, now seeing that the battle was to be thrown upon him—as that part of the British army opposed to the routed right wing, following up their victory, emerged into view—rode along the lines, telling the soldiers that all now rested on them. “Be firm and steady,” said he, “and give the finishing blow.” On came the unbroken British line, and drew up in order on the open ground in front of those stern continentals. The next moment, with a loud shout and terrible impetuosity, they rushed to the charge. Cool and steady, those brave regulars watched their approach, undismayed by their shouts and fierce aspect, until within sure striking distance, and then poured a destructive volley in their very bosoms. Stunned by the terrific discharge, the solid formations recoiled a moment, and before they could recover the Americans were upon them with the bayonet. Shouting like madmen, they swept through the covering smoke and random discharges like a resistless

tide. Nothing could check the fury of their onset; and through and through the broken ranks they went, with the strength of a falling mountain. Oh! that Washington's cavalry or Lee's legion had then been ready to burst on the shattered line, or even another regiment to follow up the victory, and the red field would have been won. Yet still, onward swept that victorious regiment of Marylanders, chasing the fugitives before them. Suddenly turning upon the first battalion of the guards, before whom their companions had fled in terror, they fell on it with such fury that they shivered it in pieces with one fell blow; and then, without taking time to breathe, rushed on the others. The conflict here became dreadful. That brave regiment, disdaining to fly, bore up against the overwhelming numbers that increased as it advanced, and was still maintaining its ground, when Washington, seeing how hard beset it was, ordered the bugles to sound, and the next moment the ground shook under the steady gallop of his squadron, as with shaking sabres and loud shouts they burst on the enemy. In vain did those veterans close up their ranks to meet the shock, and surround themselves with a girdle of steel—in vain did their officers shout: "Be steady and firm;" over and through everything went the fierce riders, trampling them down like grass. Stuart, who led them on, strove manfully to rally them to the charge, and as he moved about in the tumult, came upon Captain Smith of those glorious Marylanders, and sprang fiercely upon him. The latter, parrying the Englishman's small-sword with his left hand, brought

down his heavy sabre on his head with such force that he cleaved him to the spine. The next moment, stunned by a musket-ball, though not killed, he fell on his antagonist. Scarcely had he touched the body, before the soldier who had fired the shot also fell across him. Nothing could now stay the excited Americans; and Washington's cavalry plunged amid the disordered guards, striking them down with their heavy sabres at every step. The battle seemed won; and Cornwallis, who saw the rout of his guards, spurred towards them. Washington, beholding him, pointed forward with his sword, and shouted to his men to follow. Pressing close after him, they dashed onward, and the great prize was almost within their grasp, when Washington's cap falling from his head, he dismounted to pick it up. At the same moment the officer at the head of the column, shot through the body, reeled in his saddle; while his horse, now unmanageable, turned and carried him off the field. The squadron, seeing one leader down, and the other riding away, thought a retreat had been sounded, and wheeled after the latter. In a moment, however, Washington came galloping up, and with a loud voice arrested their retreat, and again led them to the charge. But Cornwallis had retired, and so Washington fell again upon the guards, breaking to pieces every formation, and riding down every incipient square. The British commander saw at a glance that this rout of his guards must be arrested, or the whole army ruined; and hastening to his artillery, that crowned a slight eminence, he ordered it to open on the driving mass.

*"Stop,"* said one of the leaders of that broken band, who had been borne back dreadfully wounded from the fight, *"you will destroy your own men."* *"We must do it,"* replied Cornwallis, *"to save ourselves from destruction."* The flying guards were now mingled up with their pursuers so completely, that every shot aimed at the latter would strike them also. But stern necessity required the sacrifice, and the next moment the artillery opened like a clap of thunder, and the heavy shot went tearing through the bleeding guards with frightful effect. The wounded officer turned away sick from the murderous spectacle, but Cornwallis gazed sternly on the slaughter, and still kept up that heavy fire, till half the battalion was stretched on the field. This checked the pursuers, who were compelled to retreat, but not the battle. Volleys of musketry, interrupted by explosions of artillery, kept the atmosphere in an uproar; while charging cavalry, and shouting infantry—firm-set columns, and broken ranks—horses galloping riderless over the plain, and heaps of dead, combined to make that lonely spot, and that bright afternoon, a scene and time of thrilling interest and terror.

No sooner had Cornwallis cleared the field with his artillery than the routed troops began to rally—some behind ravines, and some in the woods; while those regiments yet unbroken were moved forward. In the woods, on the left, Lee and Campbell still maintained the fight, and had done so from the outset, sternly refusing to yield one inch of ground. They and their foes were both out of sight, but the



incessant and fierce discharges that rung through the forest, and the wounded officers and men borne constantly back, told how close and dreadful was the struggle. But no news came from Lee. That gallant chieftain was straining every nerve to hold his position, ignorant of what had befallen the other portions of the army. Greene, in the meantime, could not advance with his few unbroken regiments on the whole British force, protected as it was by cannon, without risking all on one hazardous throw. But this was the game for Cornwallis to play not for him; it was victory or ruin with the former, and at length, by incredible efforts, he succeeded in forming his line of battle anew, and again steadily advanced. Discipline had restored to him all his unwounded men; while Greene surveyed, with an anxious eye, the few regiments on which alone he could rely. Though burning to renew the conflict, he dared not trust again his militia, who had been broken at the outset, and so he ordered a retreat while it could be safely made. Silence had now fallen on the field, and all was still, save the beating to arms and the incessant volleys from the woods on the left, from whence no tidings reached Greene.

The moment the former began his retreat, Cornwallis sent forward two regiments to break the rear-guard; but the brave Virginians who composed it received them with such a scourging fire, and constantly presented such a firm front, that they soon gave it up, and the army retired three miles and halted.

The bright Spring sun had now gone down in a

mass of clouds, and the wind began to moan through the forest, foretelling a storm. After a few hours' repose, the weary army, in a cold and driving rain, again took up its line of march for its old encampment at Reedy Fork. All night long the bleeding patriots continued to press forward, with the storm beating upon them; and wet and exhausted, and many of them barefoot, reached, at daybreak, their camp. One cannot think of those brave continentals, and Virginia troops, measuring the heavy miles back from the battle which they had struggled so nobly to win, without the most painful feelings. Deserted by their own friends, they had, nevertheless, resolutely and gallantly met the onset of the whole British army;—then, stung with disappointment, and venting their rage on the cowardly Carolinians, closed their toilsome day by a heavy night-march. Many a noble heart lay cold and still on the field where they had struggled—here you could see the track of Washington's cavalry by the ghastly sabre-strokes that disfigured the dead; and there by the heaps of the slain, where the gallant Maryland regiment, after it had broken to pieces one, a third larger than its own, met the guards in full career. Around the court-house the ground was red with blood, and American and Briton lay almost in each other's embrace. But amid the piles of the slain there were two scarlet uniforms to one of the continentals. Our unerring marksmen had made terrible havoc, and one-quarter\* of Cornwallis's army had fallen on the field he had won. No wonder Fox said

\* Six hundred killed and wounded.

on the floor of the House of Commons, when the victory was announced: "*Another such victory will ruin the British army.*"

The troops under Greene, so far from being dispirited, were full of confidence and courage, and demanded eagerly to be led immediately against the enemy. Those who had fought bravely panted to re-measure their strength with the foe; while the regiments which had made such a shameful flight, stung by the reproaches of their comrades, earnestly asked for an opportunity to wipe out the disgrace. How different was the state of Cornwallis. He had taken nothing but three pieces of artillery, which could not be brought off except by hand, as the horses had been shot down, and so left behind; while encumbered with the wounded, and diminished in his strength, he lost all power to maintain his ground. No sooner, therefore, had he collected his wounded, than he began a precipitate retreat. His victory had been so dearly bought, that nothing but a rapid flight could save him.

This battle, so admirably planned, would have finished at once the career of the British commander, had all of the American troops behaved even with ordinary bravery. If the first line had poured in but *one* well-directed volley, the English army would have been shaken, and handed over to the second line disordered, or at least, discouraged, instead of fresh and excited, as it was; and by the time it reached the court-house, the fate of the day would have been settled. Or, had the second regiment of the Marylanders showed but half the firmness their comrades

of the first did, the victory would have been complete. Greene reckoned, and not without cause, on the good conduct of this regiment; but instead of meeting the grenadiers of the guards with courage, they turned and fled at the first fire, leaving all the work to their companions, who had just broken one regiment into fragments. It was expected that the Carolina militia, unaccustomed to battle, would make but a feeble resistance; but the failure of this body was a grievous disappointment, and left but a small band on which the American commander could rely. When Greene beheld it, he hastened forward, and in his eagerness came near being taken prisoner; for, in approaching the spot where the conflict was raging, he suddenly found himself upon the enemy, and screened from them only by a few saplings. His danger was imminent; but with that presence of mind which never deserted him, he walked away quietly so as not to attract attention and provoke pursuit. His whole plan exhibited the greatest genius and daring combined; and as it was, he gained all that a mere victory would have given him. An utter rout would have finished the campaign; but he could scarcely hope for this with the troops under him.

Still, undaunted by his reverse, he determined after giving his men a short repose to hazard another battle. In the meantime, he heard of the flight of his enemy, and was about to start in rapid pursuit, when, to his dismay, he found that his ammunition was nearly exhausted. This saved the victor from a complete overthrow; and those brave officers who had

struggled so nobly, were compelled to remain inactive. Washington, and Lee, and Campbell, and Smith, and Howard, and Stevens, and Huger, and last and noblest, Gunby, and many others, had won for themselves an immortal name, but they were impatient for another trial.

As soon as he was able to make a demonstration, Greene sent forward Lee to hang on the rear of the crippled enemy, and immediately followed with his whole army. Nothing could shake the iron will of this man, or for a moment relax his energy. To-day retreating, to-morrow advancing—now pouring his columns to the charge, and now conducting them bleeding, through the storm and darkness, to a place of safety; and again, with scarcely a day's repose, breaking into a furious offensive—he exhibits all the qualities of a headlong warrior, and of a careful, great commander.

The British fled towards Wilmington, and Greene thundered in their rear. The former dared not hazard a battle, and pressed forward towards Deep River, and halting at Ramsey's Mills, threw a bridge across the stream, and waited the approach of the Americans. Greene, who had been detained a day, in order to bring up his ammunition, urged his weary troops along the muddy roads, and at length approached the river. But Cornwallis had changed his mind, and without waiting to receive the attack, hurried his army across the bridge, and attempted to destroy it. But before he could effect his object, Lee burst on him with his legion, and he was compelled to seek safety in precipitate flight, leaving

some of his dead on the banks, and the beef his men had killed hanging in the stalls. But here the troops, overcome by their rapid marches and long toils, and seeing the enemy again beyond their reach, refused to proceed any farther. No entreaties or remonstrance could prevail on them to stir; for the term of enlistment of many of them had expired, and they were far from their homes. Thus fell a second blow on the heart of this indomitable chieftain, and he was compelled to see his adversary withdraw in security. Still, could one have looked upon that army, he would scarcely blame them. Barefoot, half-clad, and without provisions, they had marched, fought, and retreated, and suffered, and now needed repose. Their iron leader could not expect from them what he himself would undertake, and he was forced to halt. With the most strenuous exertions, he could not get a supply of provisions; and the brave fellows, gnawed by the pangs of hunger, seized on the most disgusting food with avidity, but not a murmur escaped their lips. They loved their chieftain with devotion, for he asked nothing from them he did not himself cheerfully encounter; and many a night they had seen him drenched and worn, riding in their midst, encouraging their spirits, and rousing their patriotism. And now, as their term of service expired, he called them out, and, after thanking them for their bravery and cheerful co-operation, dismissed them to their homes. With loud cheers they hailed him, as he rode along their lines, and then commenced their weary journey to their distant fire-sides.

With his army reduced to one-third of its size, no other course seemed left open to him but to take some central position, and watch the enemy. Cornwallis was beyond his reach if he attempted a pursuit; besides, he was too weak to risk a battle with him. He had accomplished all that could be done with an inferior force—out-manœuvred and thwarted his enemy till he could raise reinforcements—then fallen on him with terrible slaughter, and pursued him as long as an efficient army was left under his command, and now it was time to pause and reflect. What could be done in his crippled condition and destitute state? The gates of success, and even action, seemed shut upon him, but his genius struck out a plan as original as it was bold. With his little band he resolved to carry the war into South Carolina, and fall on the line of the enemy's posts established between Ninety-Six and Charleston. These were all well garrisoned and fortified; but if they could be taken, the base of Cornwallis's operations would be destroyed. Still it was a hazardous experiment; for if the latter, with his superior army, should follow him up, he would be crushed between it and the garrisons; but relying on his own resources and the confusion into which his sudden movements would throw his adversary, he set out on his desperate undertaking. Only a week's repose was given to the soldiers, and then a series of toils entered upon, to which all they had before suffered was but a commencement. He had calculated all beforehand, and said: "*I know the troops will be exposed to every hardship. But, as I*



*share it with them, I hope they will bear up under it with that magnanimity which has already supported them, and for which they deserve everything of their country."* Secretly and carefully the army took up its line of march, and in twelve days reached Camden, where Lord Rawdon lay, strongly fortified.

#### BATTLE OF HOBKIRK'S HILL

Greene took up his position on Hobkirk's Hill, about two miles north of the town, and remained there three days; when, hearing that a British reinforcement was coming up, he hastened to cut it off. Finding, after a fatiguing march, that the report was unfounded, he retraced his steps, and, on the 25th of April, again drew up his little army, scarce a thousand strong, in order of battle on Hobkirk's Hill. The troops, who had now been twenty-four hours without food, were hastily supplied, and sat scattered around in every direction, cooking it, when the fire from the vedettes in the distance announced the approach of the enemy. Greene was at the time in his tent, drinking a cup of coffee. In a moment he was in the saddle, his eye gleaming in exultation and confidence. The drums beat to arms—the hungry soldiers came rushing back to their posts—the stern order passed along the lines, and in a few minutes they stood prepared for the onset. The road ran directly through the American encampment, on each side of which extended the army in a single line, one wing resting on a swamp, the other lost in the woods. The artillery occupied the road, while

two hundred and fifty militia, and Washington's cavalry, were stationed in the rear, as a reserve. For awhile all was silent around that little army cresting the hill; and they stood and listened anxiously to the firing in the forest, as the picket guards, retreating inch by inch, kept up a sharp fire on the advancing columns. Nothing could be seen except the smoke as it curled up over the tree-tops, revealing the struggle below, and all was breathless suspense, until at length the enemy emerged into the open ground, right in front of the height. The moment Greene's eye fell upon them, he saw that the narrowness of their front gave him a rare opportunity for a flank movement, and he resolved to overthrow them by one fell swoop. "*Let Campbell and Ford turn their flanks, the cavalry take them in the rear, and the centre charge with trailed bayonets,*" fell, in a single breath, from his lips; and swinging down round the enemy, the whole army precipitated itself forward. The artillery opened, followed by the rapid volleys of the infantry; and, in a moment, the field was in a blaze. Washington went galloping by a circuitous route to the rear; while that resolute line closed like the hand of fate around the British column. Thrown into confusion by the searching fire, and rolling back before the steadily advancing bayonets, the enemy began to break on all sides, and one more bold push and the day would be won. Greene, at the head of a single regiment, fought like the meanest soldier, and led the intrepid band steadily through the fire that wasted it. But in this critical moment, the veteran regiment of

Gunby, which had wrought such prodigies at Guilford, gave way; and Rawdon, rallying at the sight, rapidly extended his lines—pushing back the wings of the Americans, until, at length, the two armies stood front to front. Greene, broken-hearted at the flight of his favorite regiment, on which he had placed his hopes, galloped up to it, and sending his stern commands through the ranks, again rallied them; but it was too late. Spurring his steed up the hill, he cast his eye on the conflict beneath, and lo! all was lost. His centre was pierced, the artillery pushed back, and the enemy, with loud shouts, were rolling in one broad wave up the hill. His fond hopes were all blasted; and the irretrievable rout of his army burst like a thunder-clap upon him. Instantly ordering a retreat, he covered it with a single regiment; and spurring amid the bullets which rained in an incessant shower about him, succeeded in restoring partial order. In the meantime his artillery was almost within the enemy's grasp. The men had left the guns, and had just turned to flee, when Greene burst in a fierce gallop among them, and leaping from his horse, seized the dragropes himself. This heroic example shamed the men into courage, and they flew again to their places. At this critical moment Smith came up with forty-five of the camp-guards to their defence. On this little band, drawn up behind the guns, the British charged with both infantry and cavalry, and in a few minutes the Americans, though they fought with incredible fury, were reduced to fourteen; the next moment, having fired simultaneously, the cavalry was

upon them while in the act of loading, and every man of them fell dead in his footsteps. The artillery seemed now irretrievably lost; but before the victors could secure their prize, Washington burst upon them with his fierce riders, trampling them under foot, and scattering them like leaves from his path. In the outset of the battle he had reached, as he was ordered, the rear of the army, where he came upon a motley group of surgeons and attendants, and so forth, which he should have rode down without hesitation, and charged home upon the main body of the enemy. This, however, his generous heart forbade him to do, and while he was securing the prisoners the battle was lost. Had he rode steadily forward, he might have compensated for the failure of Gunby. But the fortunate moment had passed, and finding that Greene had been beaten back, he made good his retreat, and arrived just in time to save the artillery. Each man had his prisoner behind him, and thus, riding double, they came upon the enemy—but it was the work of only a moment for those bold dragoons to tumble each of those prisoners off, and then, with a shout, rush to the charge. Having rescued the artillery, Washington wheeled and fell like a loosened cliff on the shouting and victorious army, rolling it back on itself in utter amazement. This checked the pursuit, and Greene withdrew without further attack.

The grand cause of the failure was the unexpected retreat of Gunby's regiment; though the brave fellows who composed it were not to blame. As they were advancing, the first line, instead of charging

bayonet, began to fire—this being arrested, they marched on down the hill, when the captain commanding the right fell dead. This caused a little confusion, though not a company retreated, or even halted. Gunby, seeing there was some little disorder, and fearing it might increase, ordered the line to halt until the second line could close in at quick-step. He shouted this command at the top of his voice; but amid the noise of battle, it was not understood; and the soldiers, mistaking it for an order to retreat, turned and fled. Gunby was court-martialled for his conduct, and severely reprimanded. It was clear that he ought not to have halted his men, but kept them moving till the second line advanced to their aid. This reversing orders and confusing the soldiers in the very moment of attack, is the most ruinous thing that can be done.

Greene retreated only a few miles after the battle, hoping that Rawdon would be encouraged to a second attack; but he wisely forbore, and shut himself up in Camden.

Never was the former in a more critical situation than at this moment. The blow he had planned so secretly, and planted so skilfully, had not only failed, but waked up the enemy in every quarter to his designs. Cornwallis, when he heard of it, knew that his line of posts was threatened, and revolved long and anxiously his course. First he determined to push on after his daring and adventurous adversary, and overwhelm him; but finally turned his steps to Virginia, to close his career at Yorktown. In the meantime, reinforcements were hurrying up to Raw-

don from Georgetown. On these Marion and Lee hung with threatening aspect, but they finally succeeded in reaching Camden. With his little destitute army about him, Greene now felt the full peril of his position, and, for the first time during the campaign, his strong heart sunk in despondency. Rawdon was within striking distance of him, with a large force, while word was brought that Cornwallis was marching rapidly against him. His ammunition was exhausted, his recruits destitute of arms, and Congress seemed to have abandoned him to his fate. Deserted, impoverished, almost surrounded—with only a small half-naked band around him, he for a moment bent under this accumulation of troubles, and the tide of despondency his iron will had so long kept back, flowed in one resistless flood over his manly heart. He drank deep of the cup of bitterness, and a heavy cloud rested on his brow as he sought in vain to pierce the gloom that surrounded him. It was, however, but a moment, and his strong nature roused itself to grapple with the difficulties that beset him. “*We will dispute every inch of ground,*” said he, “*though Lord Rawdon, I know, will push me back to the mountains.*”

The news of Cornwallis’s march to Virginia, saved him this alternative, and allowed him to carry out his original plan. Rawdon, seeing that despatch alone could save his garrisons south, immediately broke up his encampment at Camden; and having destroyed his stores and fortifications, and with the blazing town, which he had fired, to light his path, began his rapid march towards Fort Motte.

Thither, also, Greene hastened, to save Marion and Lee, who were pressing the siege. Both commanders, one with alarm and the other with joy, heard, just before they reached it, that it had surrendered to our arms. This fort occupied a sort of middle position, between Ninety-Six on the extreme northwest and Charleston on the extreme southeast; hence its fall broke the chain of posts completely.

The field was now open again to Greene, and sending forward Lee against Fort Granby, he followed in rapid marches with the main army. On approaching the place, he found it already in the hands of Lee. His face brightened up at the news—the morning was dawning, and a few more efforts, and lo! the sun of prosperity would rise. Hurrying on Lee, to unite with Pickens, now before Augusta, he turned his steps towards Ninety-Six, the last and strongest fortress. The garrison had been ordered long before to withdraw, but the messenger who bore the despatch was captured, and Cruger, who commanded, was left to defend himself as he could.

#### STORMING OF NINETY-SIX.

On the 22d of May, after a fatiguing march, Greene found himself before the fort, and immediately began his approaches. With Kosciusko and Pendleton, he made the entire circuit of the fortifications, going so near that he was fired upon by the sentinels. First came a heavy redoubt surrounded with a ditch and frieze, and an abatis. A few rods distant, was a stockade fort, supported by two strong block-



houses—the whole defended by a well-supplied garrison. On the 23d, Greene broke ground, and pushed his operations on with the utmost vigor—day and night, without a moment's intermission, the spade and pick-axe were heard in the trenches. Sally after sally was made by the enemy, and a fierce fire kept up, but still the resolute workmen toiled on. Lee having failed before Augusta, now came up with his legion, and invested the stockade fort, and soon cut off the supply of water—the guns had been silenced before. Day after day the work went on, and closer and closer drew the toils around the garrison. All that bravery and resolution could do, had been done, and for eighteen days they had made desperate efforts to arrest the progress of the besiegers. But now the scene was drawing to a close, and in a few days more the fortress must fall.

At this critical juncture, news arrived of the rapid approach of Rawdon by forced marches, to relieve the garrison. Greene strained every nerve to bring up Marion, and Sumpter, and Pickens, that he might meet his enemy once more in the open field. "Let us have a field day," said he, "and I doubt not it will be a glorious one." Vain wish! the British commander knew that everything depended on celerity, and he soon was upon him with double the number of his army. Nothing now remained but to retreat; but this the soldiers could not bear to think of after all their toil, and begged so earnestly to be led to the assault, that Greene at length consented. He would not cripple his whole army by a general storm, and so he directed some picked regiments to make the

attempt first on the stockade fort. On the 17th of June, the regiments destined to the assault stood to their arms—the forlorn-hopes took their stations; while fascines, with which to fill up the ditch, and hookmen, with long iron hooks, to pull down the sand-bags that lined the ramparts, completed the stern preparation. The riflemen were in their towers, and the artillery was trained on the fort. At eleven o'clock the first cannon was fired, and the men sprung into the trenches; then the whole opened at once, the signal for the assault, and amid the roar of artillery, and peals of musketry, the brave fellows, with one fierce shout, plunged into the ditch, and began to climb the walls. In a moment a dreadful volley swept them down, yet they still pressed on over their dead companions, and mounted the ramparts against the line of bayonets that bristled above them. The fort was gallantly won, but the redoubt continued to hold out, and poured an incessant, galling fire on the Americans who crowded the ditch. But not a man yielded, and the assault was pressed with desperate impetuosity. But the ditch was too deep, and the parapets too high, and all efforts to scale them were unavailing. For a whole hour had this deadly conflict continued, before Greene ordered the troops to be withdrawn. He had won the stockade fort, and might yet win all; but he was afraid to risk his entire army, when Lord Rawdon was almost upon him. The assault had been nobly made, and the soldiers behaved with the courage of veteran troops, and it was with despondency and gloom they heard the orders to retreat. They had been nearly a

month laboring to secure the prize, and now they were compelled to abandon it—with heavy hearts they beheld the ramparts, still red with the blood of their comrades, fade away in the distance.

Rawdon came rapidly up, and, passing the fort, pressed hard after Greene; but after marching twenty-two miles, his overtaken troops gave out, and he returned. Ordering Ninety-Six to be evacuated, he began his retreat, harassed at every step by Lee, who kept dealing blow after blow, and yet receiving none in return. In the track of the retreating army were crowds of men, women and children, fleeing from the vengeance of the Whigs, whom they had insulted, and robbed, and slain without mercy. The day of retribution had come; and the panic-struck wretches fled to Charleston, to escape the vengeance due to their crimes.

Greene no sooner saw his enemy retreat, than he turned, with his usual daring, in pursuit. Following rapidly on his flying traces, he again and again, by his deep-laid plans and unwearied exertions, almost captured a part of the army. Daunted by no danger, overcome by no toil, never beguiled into repose, he seemed omnipresent to his foe. At length, after having forced him back at every point—Orangeburg alone remaining occupied between him and the coast—he resolved to rest his troops. The heat of summer had set in, and the suffering and exposure of his men demanded some relief. Choosing out a salubrious position on the high hills of Santee, he went into summer-quarters, and all the freedom and wild mirth of a camp life commenced. But to Greene

there was no repose; and he immediately set about a re-organization of the army. Congress, however, could do nothing, and no money was sent him with which to pay off the soldiers. Still, partial success crowned his efforts—resulting from the re-establishment of the civil power, which the presence of the enemy had abolished.

As soon as he had rested his troops, he was again in motion, saying, "*We will seek the enemy wherever we can find them, unless they take refuge within the gates of Charleston.*" On the 22d of August he broke up his encampment, and began his march, looking anxiously for reinforcements, without which he would be powerless. Said he, in writing to Lee: "*We must have victory or ruin; nor will I spare anything to obtain it.*" Pushing on under the broiling August sun, he ordered in Pickens and Marion with the troops under their command, and approached Orangeburg. At length he heard that the enemy had halted at Eutaw Springs, and immediately moved forward to within seven miles, and halted. Here Marion joined him; and that night, the 7th of September, the toil-worn chieftain wrapped himself in his cloak, and slept on the ground, in the midst of his soldiers, with the root of a tree for his pillow.

#### BATTLE OF EUTAW SPRINGS

With the first dawn the drums beat to arms; but Greene was already on horseback, and soon had his troops under way. The eastern sky was red and glowing with the near approach of the up-rising sun,

and the dew-drops lay fresh and sparkling on the foliage, as they passed through the forest. In two columns—the militia under the gallant Marion and Pickens, in front, and the brave continentals in the rear, while Lee's fierce legion led the van, they moved silently on. But, with the exception of the officers, there were few bright uniforms to be seen. Whole ranks were barefoot and in rags, and hundreds were stark naked, with nothing but tufts of moss on their shoulders and hips, to keep their muskets and cartridge-boxes from chafing their skins. It was a sight to move the heart, to see those naked freemen pressing on to battle, under the flag of liberty. Greene cast his anxious eye along the dark files, as they swept noiselessly onward, feeling that a few hours more would settle the fate of his army. The enemy he was advancing against was not only superior in numbers and discipline, but occupied an advantageous position, while a large portion of his own soldiers had never been in action, and would be compelled to take such ground as would be left them. No wonder that his heart was filled with the deepest solicitude, as he thought of the unequal contest he was seeking. Still, a battle he must have, and a victory too, cost what it might, before his troops again disbanded.

About eight o'clock, when yet four miles from Eutaw, the rolling of drums in the distance announced the approach of the enemy. It proved to be only a detachment, which Lee's legion scattered before them like chaff of the summer threshing-floor. The shouts that were sent back over the American

columns, inspired new hope and courage, and they pressed triumphantly forward.

The British army, under Stewart, lay at Eutaw Springs, in an open field—the only one in the whole region—protected on one side by the Eutaw creek, while in the rear stood barns and out-houses, presenting a rallying point in case of disaster. Added to all this, there was a strong brick house, commanding the entire ground. This house was in fact an impregnable fort, for the Americans had no artillery heavy enough to batter it down. Through this open space ran the road along which Greene was advancing. For miles away on either side, it was an unbroken forest; and that sweet spot, resting in the very bosom of nature, solitary and alone, was to be the meeting-place of the armies. When the news of Greene's approach was brought him, the English commander was surprised, but immediately began to put his army in order of battle. The tents were left standing in the morning sunlight, and the troops formed in a single line in front of them, and awaited the onset. They had not long to remain in suspense, for with streaming banners and glittering bayonets the American columns came steadily on, and soon the first line drew up face to face with the whole British force, and the battle opened. Gaines, with the American artillery, came sweeping in a gallop along the road, and hastily unlimbering his guns, vomited forth fire on the British line—the enemy's artillery replied, and an incessant peal of thunder rolled through the forests of Eutaw. The raw militia bore up like veterans, and though outnumbered, two to

one, delivered their fire with such precision and swiftness, as for a while to overbalance that of the enemy. It ran in a sharp, quick rattle from one extremity of the line to the other, with deadly effect, while the deep regular volleys of the English replied. Greene's eye kindled with exultation as he saw how firmly and resolutely his untried troops closed on the foe. But at length the superior numbers of the enemy began to tell, and they moved forward. The militia shaking under the pressure, slowly recoiled when Greene ordered up some of his own battalions to their relief, which, led on by the gallant Sumner, came into action in beautiful order, and delivered such a scourging fire, and followed it up with such rapidity and precision, that the English were compelled to fall back to their first position, and the battle raged again with tenfold fury. A part of the artillery on both sides had been dismounted; but the rest kept thundering on in deafening explosions, till the trees trembled and rocked above the combatants. Finding his line pressed so hotly, the English commander ordered up his reserve, and the entire army was now engaged. Greene still kept by him two battalions of continentals, the brave Marylanders and Virginians, while Washington, with his fierce horsemen panting for the fray, sat in the rear. With these he had planned a terrible blow, but the moment to deliver it had not yet arrived. His eye flashed fire as he surveyed the tumultuous field, and he watched with delight the advancing smoke of the American volleys. Loud shouts were borne back to his ear, and our gallant troops made head against the whole Brit-



ish array. But superior numbers at length prevailed—our line halted, and then, after a short struggle, bent backward like a serpent of fire over the ground. Vainly struggling to spring to its place again, it became broken; when, observing it, the whole English army threw itself forward with deafening shouts. But pressing up its advantage too eagerly, it became disordered, which Greene's quick eye detected instantaneously. This was his time, and he shouted to his brave continentals, "*Advance, and sweep the field with the bayonet!*" A loud huzza was the answer; and, with leaning forms and trailed bayonets, those two terrible battalions moved swiftly and sternly forward. In a moment the whole interest of the battle gathered around them, and every eye was turned on their ranks, as they came in beautiful order and stern array within reach of the enemy's volleys. The British saw them approach without dismay, and sending up a loud shout of defiance, poured in a rapid and wasting fire. But nothing could stop those noble troops—on, on they swept, shoulder to shoulder, without shrinking, through the driving sleet. The Virginians, galled dreadfully by the fire, gave one volley, then rushed forward: but the stern Marylanders never pulled a trigger. Their rapid tread shook the field, their terrible shout drowned even the roar of musketry, and with their eyes bent in wrath on the enemy, they moved in one dark and dreadful wave to the shock. Before their steady valor and determined aspect, the firmest veterans shrunk in dismay, and with one loud cry they fell like a rolling rock on the shaking ranks. Through and over them they went with headlong fury, turning the whole army in

affright over the field. Lee, too, came down on the flank with his legion, and the bugles of Washington's cavalry rung over the tumult, and their fierce gallop made the earth tremble. The British army became like a flock of sheep before them. Past and through their camp, and along the road to Charleston, they fled, leaving their tents standing on the plain, and all seemed lost. But, alas! that deserted camp, with its luxuries, was more potent than when filled with warriors. Breaking from their ranks, the soldiers swarmed through them after the spoils—all but Lee's gallant legion, which turned neither to the right hand nor to the left, but pressed fiercely on after the fugitives. In this crisis, a few British soldiers, with Sheridan at their head, threw themselves into the brick house; and, though pressed so closely by the Americans, that there was a desperate struggle at the door for the mastery, they succeeded in shutting themselves in. Many of their own officers and men, however, were left without, whom the Americans seized and held before them as they retreated, as shields against the marksmen in the house. The artillery was hurried up, but proved to be too light to batter down the walls, while from every window was poured an incessant fire. It was then that those who had broken their ranks and rushed into the tents, received the punishment of their deeds. As fast as they emerged into the open air, the deadly shots from the house mowed them down, and many a gallant officer, in striving to force his men out, was picked off. Thus ingloriously fell those brave troops, who had passed scathed through the fight.

Meanwhile, in an impenetrable thicket, which

flanked the field of battle, there still remained a detachment of upwards of three hundred British, whom no effort could dislodge. Washington came thundering on them with his squadron, but he could not pierce the hedge-like shrubbery. Halting to wheel his men by sections into an open space where he thought he could make a charge, such a destructive fire was opened on him, that every officer but two, and one-third of his entire squadron, fell at the first volley. His own horse was shot under him, and himself bayoneted and taken prisoner. The remnants of the shattered band, undismayed, wheeled and charged with incredible fury. Vain valor! the thicket was like a wall of adamant in their faces, and the Delaware infantry brought up to their relief met with no better success. The British officer who commanded that detachment, finding the Americans slowly enveloping him, at length began to retreat, hugging the thicket and ravine as he went, until he came where the house protected him. This enabled the British commander to form his line of battle anew. But Greene had already gained enough to secure his object. One-quarter of the whole English army had fallen on the field dead or wounded, another quarter he had taken prisoners; and this brilliant success he did not wish to risk in another engagement, since he knew that his adversary would be compelled to retreat. He had driven the enemy from the field, taken a part of their artillery and a quarter of their army, and crushed forever their boasted superiority with the bayonet; and so leaving a strong picket on the ground under Hampton, re-

tired from the combat, though he could have renewed the battle with success, and gained it the second time. But with his prisoners and wounded, and his army exhausted with fatigue, he could not continue the pursuit, and hence a complete victory would end only in the retreat of the enemy—a result that would occur without any more fighting.

Lee went with a flag to the English commander, to propose that both armies should unite in burying the dead. The roar of the conflict had died away, and the burning sun was still high in the heavens, when the hostile bands, forgetting their animosities, mingled together in bearing off their fallen comrades. There they lay, friend and foe, side by side—many mutually transfixed, and scowling on each other in death. The field was red with blood, and the slain lay thick as autumn-leaves over that open space. But there was one spectacle which, as it met his gaze, wrung Greene's heart with the bitterest anguish. Before him, in ghastly rows, lay fifty of his brave officers, pale and cold in death, or bleeding fast from their wounds. In a small, miserable hovel, standing by itself, were the officers of Washington's squadron, who had fallen under that dreadful fire from the thicket. They were all noble young men; in the morning of life—heroes every one of them, who had closed firmly round him in his darkest hours. As he passed among them his lips quivered—his eyes filled with tears, and to those stretched on the floor, still breathing, he said, in a voice choked with emotion: "*It was a trying duty imposed on you; but it was unavoidable. I could not help it.*"

So overcome with thirst and heat were the men, after the battle, that they ran and plunged bodily into the ponds and swamps. But their sufferings did not end with the day. The sickly season had set in, and fevers were added to wounds, till the hospitals were crowded, and the surgeons and physicians worn down with constant labor. The enemy had fled in affright, immediately after the battle, closely pursued by Lee's legion, and Marion's men; and Greene himself would have pushed on, but his sick and dying army required repose, and he repaired to the hills of Santee. In this distressed and crippled condition his feelings were sorely tried, and in no way more than in seeing the sufferings of his faithful soldiers. He would go himself through the hospital, cheering up the desponding, and stooping over the fevered couch of the dying, while blessings and tears followed his footsteps.

Two months passed away in this manner, and the enemy were gathering their forces again. The recruits on their way to join him, had been stopped at Yorktown, and but a feeble band remained under his command. Apparently deserted and abandoned, his officers began to despond, and proposed to abandon all further effort. "*No,*" said the intrepid and noble-hearted patriot, "*I will save the country or perish in the attempt;*" and while yet in the midst of his troubles and embarrassments, hearing of the approach of Washington against Cornwallis, and fearing the latter would attempt to retreat through the Carolinas, to Charleston, he made preparations to cross his path, and again measure strength with him. But on the

9th of November, 1781, the news was brought of the surrender of the British army; and joy and exultation reigned throughout the camp.

Greene now hoped to draw the French fleet south, to co-operate with him in reducing Charleston; but failing in this, he boldly took the field against the enemy. Sending Marion to operate between Charleston and Santee, and Sumpter to overawe the Tories at Orangeburg, he, with eight hundred men advanced against Dorchester, where one portion of the English army was lying. Stewart, his old adversary of Eutaw, was only seven miles from this place, with the other division; but Greene hoped by a surprise to crush the former, before he could come to its relief. With his eight hundred men he moved rapidly over the intervening country, and abandoning the public roads, made his way through forests and swamps, and falling on the English cavalry and breaking it in pieces, suddenly presented himself before Dorchester. But the British had heard of his approach, notwithstanding his precaution, and destroying their stores, precipitately retreated to within six miles of Charleston. Thither also Stewart fled, and thus, by a brilliant manœuvre, Greene drove the enemy from all their strong posts, and cooped them up around Charleston. The country rung with applause, and his own officers were dazzled at the genius and daring which had accomplished so much. Following up his success, he began to draw his toils closer and closer around the city. But in the very midst of his victories, came the news, that two thousand men from New York, and three thousand from Ireland,



were on their way to relieve the place. Instead of yielding to despair at this unlooked-for danger, he summoned all his energies to meet it. He called on the separate States, in the most beseeching language, for reinforcements, and the state of his mind at this time may be imagined, from a letter he wrote to Davies. "*For God's sake!*" said he, "*give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you get the troops on the march.*" Desperate as was his position, he was determined to fight; and if he could not win the battle, at least so burden the enemy with wounded, that they could not pursue him. The report, however, turned out to be a gross exaggeration, and a world of anxiety was taken from his mind. In writing to a friend afterwards, he says, with a mixture of mirth and firmness: "I have not been frightened, as Dr. Skinner says, but *I have been confidently alarmed.*"

John's Island was now the only point around Charleston in possession of the British troops, and this he determined to carry by storm. There was but one place where an army could wade to the island, and over that only at low tide; while galleys moored within four hundred yards of each other, commanded the passage. Two columns were put in motion on the night of the 13th of January, and silently began their march. Lee's reached the shore, and cautiously passed over; while the "All's well," from the galleys, ringing through the darkness, showed that they had not been discovered. He drew up his men on the beach, and there, wet and shivering, waited the arrival of the other column. This,



however, being deserted by its guide, and losing its way, had wandered all night through the fields. Messengers had been despatched in every direction, but the secrecy with which everything had been conducted rendered their search fruitless. At length light streaks along the eastern sky announced the approach of day, and the brave column was recalled to the main land, and reached it in safety, though the tide was running breast-high. This bold and skillfully laid plan had failed—but nothing daunted, Greene ordered up his artillery, and opened a fierce fire on the galleys, which forced them from their position, and drove the enemy into Charleston. Pressing up his advantage, he now threatened the city itself.

But during the privations of the winter the troops became discouraged, and some of them, mostly Pennsylvanians, plotted a revolt. They opened communications with the enemy, and everything was arranged to deliver Greene into their hands. But the day before this infamous plot was to be carried into execution, it was discovered, and the leader of it hung in presence of the army.

In the meantime Greene continued to draw his lines closer and closer around Charleston. The Spring found him still menacing the town, but without the power to inflict a blow. Summer came, and still he lingered; until at last the pestilential atmosphere began its work. Struck down by disease, the men died by scores, and the air became loaded with the stench of putrid corpses. In approaching the camp, you would have thought, from the smell, that

the whole army was rotting in the sun. It was perfectly horrible; and at last Greene himself was stricken down with the fever though his resolute spirit still remained unbroken. The utmost destitution prevailed; so that even salt had to be manufactured on the sea-shore, to furnish a supply. The soldiers were without clothing—there was scarce one blanket to ten men—hundreds were entirely naked; and thus, consumed with fever, they slowly wasted away. There were a thousand so destitute of garments, that Greene could not ask them to appear on duty, except in the most desperate emergency. Thus the Spring and Autumn passed. At length the army received a good supply of clothing, and the sickness began slowly to disappear.

The enemy were still in Charleston, but their condition was every day becoming more and more straitened; and at last they determined to evacuate the city. When the morning gun of the thirteenth of December broke over the American camp—the signal for the embarkation to commence—loud shouts of exultation went up; and as the soldiers entered the town, so great was their eagerness, that the officers could scarcely restrain them from pressing on the ranks of the retiring foe. At three o'clock Greene entered, with the governor by his side, preceded by thirty dragoons, and followed by a long procession of citizens, while his brave cavalry brought up the rear. With banners flying, and drums beating, and bugles breathing forth their most triumphant strains, the imposing procession moved through the streets. Every window was thronged with happy faces; and

the whole city had turned out to see the man, the history of whose toils, and sufferings, and battles, and victories had become familiar as household words, and who was now bringing them freedom, and joy, and peace. At first, a breathless silence hung over the immense multitude, and eyes swimming in tears were turned in mute love and admiration towards the advancing chieftain. Suddenly, as if by a common impulse, there arose over this deep hush, one long and deafening shout, till the city rocked and rung with the jubilee; and "*God bless you! God bless you!*" fell on every side, from hearts overflowing with joy and gratitude. That was a proud day to the noble-hearted veteran; and in that single moment of bliss he received a full reward for his toils. As he looked on the thousands of beaming and happy faces, his manly breast heaved with emotion, and that iron heart, which no toil, nor suffering, nor danger, could subdue, sunk under the tide of affection, and the eye that had never blenched, in the wildest of the battle, flowed in tears. Noble man! those tears honored him more than his hard-earned laurels.

This ended the war in the South—Greene had conquered at last, though under circumstances that fill the historian with wonder as he traces back the stream of events.

Of his efforts in behalf of his soldiers, and the difficulties he surmounted while commanding in Charleston, I will say nothing. In April, the news of peace was received with illuminations, and salutes of cannon, and unbounded demonstrations of joy; and

in August he bade farewell to his army, which had become endeared to him by a common suffering, and a thousand proofs of devotion, and took his journey northward. At Princeton, he met his beloved commander Washington, and there they talked over together their toils, and the glorious prospects before their country. Hastening on to his family, in Rhode Island, he was everywhere received with applause. He found his affairs involved, but taking a small house at Newport, he began to gather around him the comforts of home. But his great exposures and incessant toil, together with his sickness in his southern campaigns, had made severe inroads on his iron constitution. He, however, rallied again, and, in 1785, after passing through great pecuniary embarrassments, removed to Georgia, to a plantation on the Savannah River, which had been presented to him by the State. Soon after his arrival, he received a challenge from a Captain Gunn, on account of some decision he had made against him during the war, respecting a horse. Greene promptly rejected it, thus furnishing a noble example to the South, of which he had become a citizen. This was a bold step to take, considering the state of public feeling at that time, and Greene knew it, and wrote to Washington asking his advice. It is needless to say, the latter approved his course.

The next year he removed his family to his plantation, called Mulberry Grove, and there, surrounded by those he loved, he seemed to recover the freshness and elasticity of youth. His happiness, however, was of short duration. On his way home from

Savannah, in June, whither he had gone on business, he stopped with Mr. Gibbons over night, and next day walking out with him to view his rice plantation, received a partial sunstroke. He reached home, but the death-blow had been inflicted, and after a few days of suffering, he, on the 18th of June, 1786, closed his career. He was in the prime of life, being only forty-four years of age when he died. His body was carried to Savannah; and there followed by an immense concourse of people, and amid general mourning, was borne to the grave.

#### HIS CHARACTER

Next to Washington, Greene was the ablest commander in the revolutionary army. In person he was above the middle height, and strongly made. He had a fine face, with a florid complexion, lit up by brilliant blue eyes. His natural expression was frank and benevolent, but in battle it assumed a sternness, which showed that beneath his easy and gentle manners, was a strength of purpose not easily overcome. When highly excited, or absorbed in intense thought, he had a curious habit of rubbing violently his upper lip with his fore-finger. Inured by exposure and toil, his frame possessed a wonderful power of endurance, rendered still greater by the indomitable will it enclosed. A self-made man, he rose from the ranks to major-general of the army, solely by his own genius and force. Ignorant at first of military tactics, he applied himself with such diligence to the subject, that he mastered them in less

time than many employ on the rudiments: and the knowledge he obtained was not merely so many maxims and rules stowed away, but principles, out of which he wrought his own plans and system. He had an almost intuitive perception of character. He resembled Washington in this respect, and seemed to take the exact measure of every man who approached him. Many of his actions in the field were based upon this knowledge of his adversaries, and hence, though often inexplicable to others, perfectly clear and rational to himself. Thus, in the southern campaign against Cornwallis, his movements were sometimes considered rash in the extreme by those who judged of them merely from the relative position and strength of the armies. But to him, who could judge more correctly from his knowledge of men's views and character, than from their transient movements, what course they would take, they appeared the wisest he could adopt. A more fearless man never led an army; and his courage was not the result of sudden enthusiasm, or even of excitement, but of a well-balanced and strong character. He was never known to be thrown from his perfect self-possession by any danger, however sudden; and was just as calm and collected when his shattered army tossed in a perfect wreck around him, as in his tent at night. The roar of artillery, and the tumult of a fierce-fought battle, could not disturb the natural action of his mind—his thoughts were as clear, and his judgment was as correct in the midst of a sudden and unexpected overthrow, as in planning a campaign. This gave him tremendous power, and was

the great reason that, though beaten, he could not be utterly routed. No matter how superior his antagonist, or how unexpected the panic of his troops, he was never, like Gates, driven a fugitive from the field. He possessed two qualities seldom found united—great caution, and yet great rapidity. His blow was carefully planned, but when it came it fell like falling lightning. His mind was clear and comprehensive, and worked with ceaseless activity and energy. Nothing could escape his glance, and he seemed to forecast all the contingencies that did or could happen. His fortitude was wonderful. All exposures, all privations, all embarrassments, toils and sufferings, he bore with a patience that filled his soldiers with astonishment and admiration. During his southern campaign he never took off his clothes, except to change them, for *seven months*; and sometimes would be in the saddle two days on a stretch, without a moment's repose. His energy was equal to his endurance; for he not only *bore* everything bravely, but, under difficulties that would have weighed an ordinary man to the earth, put forth almost super-human exertions. No sooner was one obstacle surmounted than he attacked another; and no sooner was one danger escaped than he plunged into another, again to extricate himself, to the astonishment of all. Tireless as fate itself, he would neither take repose nor allow it to his enemy. His whole career, while opposed to Cornwallis, is one of the most remarkable in the history of military men. When he took command of the southern army, he found it to consist of a mere handful of destitute, un-



disciplined, and ragged troops: yet, with these, he entered the field against one of the best generals of the age supported by an army of veteran soldiers. With his raw recruits around him, he immediately began the offensive; and before his powerful enemy had time to penetrate his plans, smote him terribly at Cowpens. Having by this movement brought the whole English force against him, he was compelled to retreat, and by a series of skilful manœuvres and forced marches, completely foiled every attempt to reach him. Unable to cope with his adversary, he, nevertheless, refused to quit the field—retiring like the lion, slowly and resolutely. He kept his pursuer ever under his eye, so that he could not make a mistake without receiving a blow. He stopped when his adversary stopped, and looked him boldly in the face, till he provoked him to burn his baggage, in order to convert his entire army into light troops and thus facilitate his movements. But even then he would out-march and out-manœuvre him, penetrating and baffling every plan laid against him, and carrying out every one of his own. He thus led his enemy through the entire State of North Carolina; and the moment he turned, followed him, and dealt him such a staggering blow at Guilford, that he was compelled to a precipitate flight. No sooner was Cornwallis beyond his reach, than he turned furiously on his posts in South Carolina, and carrying them one after another, brought the war to the doors of Charleston. His combinations, throughout the whole campaign, were admirable, and succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations. He did not

commit a single error, and every failure that befell him was the result of the most arrant cowardice on the part of some of his militia.

Years before, the English officer opposed to him in Jersey, wrote, saying, "Greene is dangerous as Washington—he is vigilant, enterprising, and full of resources;" and the Chevalier de la Luzerne, Knight of Malta, in speaking of his southern campaign, said: "Other generals subdue their enemy, by the means which their country or sovereign furnishes them; but Greene appears to reduce his enemy by his own means. He commenced his campaign without either an army, provisions, or military stores. He has asked for nothing since; and yet, scarcely a post arrives from the South that does not bring intelligence of some new advantage gained over the foe. He conquers by magic. History furnishes no parallel to this."

The resources of his mind were inexhaustible—there was no gulf out of which he could not find a way of escape, and no plan, if necessary, too hopeless for him to attempt. Without a dollar from government, and penniless himself, he nevertheless managed to keep an army in the field, and conquer with it. True, it was half-naked and half-starved; but by his wonderful power he succeeded in holding it together. His soldiers loved him with devotion, and having seen him extricate himself so often from apparently inevitable ruin, they at length came to regard him as invincible. Sharing all their toils and dangers, and partaking of all their sufferings, he so wound himself into their affections, that they would

go wherever he commanded. He made of raw militia all that ever can be made of them, in the short time he had them under his control.

His patriotism was of the purest kind, and Washington spoke from correct knowledge when he said: "Could he but promote the interests of his country in the character of a corporal, he would exchange, without a murmur, his epaulettes for the knot." His own reputation and life he regarded as nothing in the cause of freedom. Next to his country, he loved Washington; and no mean ambition, or envy of his great leader, ever sullied his noble character. That affection was returned, and the two heroes moved side by side, as tried friends, through the revolutionary struggle. He was a man whose like is seldom seen; and placed in any country, opposed to any commander, would have stood first in the rank of military chieftains. In the heart of Europe, with a veteran army under his command, he would have astonished the world.

LIFE OF  
MAJOR-GENERAL LAFAYETTE

BY

J. T. HEADLEY



## MAJOR-GENERAL LAFAYETTE

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His Birth and early Marriage.—His interest in our Cause.—Resolves to come to this Country.—Forbidden by his Government.—Buys and fits out a Ship at his own expense.—Cold reception by Congress.—Warm one by Washington.—Bravery at Brandywine.—Affair of Gloucester Point.—Given command of a Division.—Affair of Barren Hill.—Bravery at Monmouth.—Sent South to repel Arnold and Cornwallis.—Coops the latter up at Yorktown.—Storming of the Redoubts.—Returns to France.—Chief Actor in the French Revolution.—Commands the National Guard.—Storming of Versailles by Women.—Scene in the Champ de Mars.—Appointed Commander in the French Army.—His Flight.—Made Prisoner by Austria.—Noble attempts to rescue him.—Liberated by Napoleon.—Returns to private life.—Visit to this Country.—His enthusiastic Reception.—His triumphal Progress.—Returns to France.—Helps to overthrow Charles X.—His Death and Character.

THERE are now and then bright spots on this darkened planet of ours—great and glorious examples of human virtue, interrupting the otherwise sad history of the race. Patriotism, which sinks self, and scorns death, is a noble virtue—yet one might be expected to defend his own land and hearth-stones. But that philanthropy which goes out of its own hemisphere, to seek the welfare, and suffer for the freedom of strangers, is a rarer virtue.

yet the one which has immortalized Lafayette. One can never think of that French boy, eighteen years of age, just married, rolling in wealth, and basking in the sunshine of court favor, sending up from the Tuileries of Paris his shout for us and our cause, without the deepest emotion. Our admiration and affection are not lessened, when we see him lavishing his wealth on our naked famishing soldiers—winding himself in child-like love round the great heart of our Washington—charging like a veteran through the ranks of our foemen, and carried pale and bleeding from our disastrous fields.

There is something exquisitely touching and beautiful in the enthusiasm of this youth in our behalf. His whole career, as connected with this country, seems to belong rather to the writer of romance, than of plain history. To give a naked narrative of facts, is to weave poetry into politics, and throw gushes of warm, generous feeling, into the cold calculations of intriguing statesmen. France wished us success, because it would revenge her for the loss of her colonies in this country, and weaken the power of her rival in the new world; but these motives never entered into the heart of Lafayette. He saw only a weak, but brave people, struggling to be free; and overleaping all questions of interest—breaking away from all the ties of home, family and country, threw himself alone into our arms. National prejudice, the jealousy of our officers, and the coldness of Congress, could not check the warm current of his sympathy. For us he was determined to fight—in our cause expend his fortune, and peril his life. Not



an exile, nor an adventurer—but a wealthy, flattered young nobleman, he cast from him the luxuries and gayeties of the French court—turned away from all the honors that clustered in his path, and became the companion of our poverty and toils—the jest and bye-word of kings.

GILBERT-MOTIER LAFAYETTE was the only son of Marquis de Lafayette, a French colonel, who fell in the battle of Minden. He was not born till two months after the death of his father. At the age of twelve years he was sent to college at Paris,—but his mother dying soon after, he became sole possessor of the family estates, and his own master. At fifteen he was chosen one of the queen's pages, and appointed an officer in the king's regiment of musketeers—the next year he married Countess Anastasie, daughter of the Duke de Noailles, a lady of immense wealth. The fortune she brought her young husband, added to his own, swelled his income to \$37,500 per annum. Ardent, enthusiastic, loving adventure and glory,—he entered on the race of life under the most flattering auspices. Independent and bold, he disdained to flatter, and sought no emoluments from the throne which threw the shadow of its protection over him.

At this early age he belonged to an association of young men, the object of which was to discuss the question of civil liberty. Our Revolution, with the principles on which it was based, startled every despot of Europe on his throne; and the young Lafayette, seemed suddenly to have opened his eyes on a world about which he had hitherto been only

dreaming. Says he: "When I first learned the subject of this quarrel, my heart espoused warmly the cause of liberty, *and I thought of nothing, but of adding also the aid of my banner.*" The question took such deep hold of his ardent and generous nature, that he could not rest until he resolved to come to America. Acquainting his relative, the Count de Broglie, with his intentions, the latter approved of his feelings, but condemned his plans. Said he: "I have seen your uncle die in the wars of Italy; I witnessed your father's death at the battle of Minden; and I will not be accessory to the ruin of the only remaining branch of the family." When, however, he found him determined, he kindly gave him his countenance and aid.

He then obtained, through the Baron de Kalb, an introduction to Silas Deane, our ambassador at Paris; who entered warmly into his feelings, and gave him a letter to Congress, requesting them to appoint him major-general in the American army. A vessel was about being fitted out to come to this country, in which the young Marquis resolved to embark. But just then came the news of our disasters—New York, Long Island—our posts on the Hudson, had fallen one after another—and our cause seemed hopeless. It was no longer possible to obtain a vessel; and Doctor Franklin and Arthur Lee, who had been added to our embassy at Paris, endeavored to persuade the young nobleman to abandon his project. But he was not to be thus deterred---our distresses only inflamed his sympathy; and calling on Mr. Deane, he told him that he was now

going to prove his ardor in the cause of American liberty, by purchasing and fitting out a vessel with his own means, in which he himself would carry out the officers they wished to send. A vessel was purchased at Bordeaux; and while it was undergoing repairs, he went to England with the Prince de Poix, in order to conceal his designs from the French government, which would have arrested them at once.

Returning to Paris, he concealed himself several days, and then went to Bordeaux. But his vessel was not ready for sea, and while he was waiting, his friends and the government got wind of his plans, and the latter immediately sent officers to arrest him. Hearing of these movements, he fled to Passage, a Spanish port, where his arrest and his letters overtook him. The king ordered him peremptorily to court, while the letters of his friends were violent in the extreme. Here was a dilemma for the bold stripling. To prevent his departure from being known, he had concealed it even from his young wife, and her letter reproached him for his cruelty. This shook his resolution more than the threats of his relatives or the authority of the king. He returned to Bordeaux, and opened a correspondence with the government, justifying his course, and asking permission to depart. Receiving no answer, he determined at all hazards to sail, and disguising himself as a courier, started for Passage, where his vessel lay. His pursuers were on the track, but his disguise protected him, and he reached Passage in safety, and the same day weighed anchor and stood out to sea. Baron de Kalb, and eleven other officers,

accompanied him, and after a voyage of seven weeks, he finally reached Georgetown, South Carolina, and received his first welcome from Major Huger. Repairing immediately to Charleston, he presented Moultrie with clothing, arms, &c., for a hundred or a hundred and fifty men, as a reward for their gallant defence of Sullivan's Island. His letters to his wife, written at this period, are full of affection, and exhibit the ardor and enthusiasm of a youth on whom this new country, with its new scenes, customs, and manners, had made a lively impression.

Hastening on to Philadelphia—riding nine hundred miles of the distance on horseback, he presented his letters to Congress, together with the stipulation of Mr. Deane, respecting the rank he was to hold. Congress, however, received him coldly; such a host of foreign officers, many of them needy adventurers, had applied for appointments, that it began to be alarmed; and Mr. Lovell, one of the members, told him he thought his request would be denied. Besides, Lafayette was a mere boy, only nineteen years of age, and it was risking too much to place him in a responsible position. But he was not to be offended or deterred by coldness, and so the next day he sent the following note to Congress: “After the sacrifices I have made, I have the right to exact two favors; *one is, to serve at my own expense—the other is, to serve at first as a volunteer.*” “Favors” indeed, to fight at his own expense, without rank or emolument, and for the freedom of strangers, who received him coldly! Congress must have possessed

hearts of stone to have resisted this magnanimity; it could not do it, and immediately made out his commission. The next day he was introduced to Washington at a dinner-party, and the impression the latter made on him, may be inferred from his own language—says he, “Although he was surrounded by officers and citizens, it was impossible to mistake, for a moment, his majestic figure and deportment.”

After dinner, Washington took him aside, and told him always to regard himself as one of his own family—pleasantly adding, that he must not expect the luxuries of a court in a republican army. From that moment a friendship commenced between them, which only grew stronger with time. The generous heart of Washington warmed spontaneously towards this enthusiastic, self-sacrificing youth, and he took him to his arms at once, and loved him as a son. That affection was returned, and there is nothing more touching and beautiful in our Revolutionary history, than the attachment between that strong, self-reliant, mature man, and the young, impulsive nobleman. But though there was such a disparity in their age and experience, there was not in the height of their persons, and they moved about head and shoulders above all the rest.

On the day that he arrived in camp, there was a review of the troops, and one can well imagine that those eleven thousand men “presented a strange spectacle” to him: “Their clothes,” he writes, “were partly-colored, and many of them were partly naked; the best clad wore *hunting-shirts*—large gray

linen coats. As to their military tactics, it will be sufficient to say that, for a regiment ranged in order of battle, to move forward on the right of its line, *it was necessary for the left to make a continued countermarch.* They were all arranged in two lines, the smallest men in the first line—no other distinction, as to height, was ever observed.”

Soon after, the battle of Brandywine occurred, in which Lafayette behaved with the greatest gallantry. He sought the post of danger; and while on foot, endeavoring to rally the troops, received a wound in the leg. In the flight he came very near being taken, and but for his aide, Gima, who helped him on a horse; this, his first battle in behalf of American freedom, would probably have been his last. As he was hurrying over the field, he met Washington, advancing to check the pursuit, and was about to turn back with him, when the loss of blood obliged him to halt, and have his wound bandaged. In the final rout, he was compelled, though pale and bleeding, to ride twelve miles without stopping. At length, coming to a bridge, he endeavored, weak and exhausted as he was, to rally the troops, and was straining every nerve when Washington and his suite came galloping up. He then had his wound dressed, and the next morning was carried into Philadelphia, and from thence, on the approach of the British, to Bethlehem, and left in the care of the Moravians, who nursed him with the greatest solicitude. The pious brotherhood endeavored to instil in his mind sentiments of peace—he listened with great attention, but was planning the while an attack

on the British possessions in the West Indies, and another on the English factories in the Isle of France. These projects were forwarded to the French court; but, though approved, were not carried out, as it still occupied a neutral position between the colonies and England. The French minister, however, was pleased with the spirit and energy of the young Republican, and remarked pleasantly: "He will end one day, by unfurnishing the palace of Versailles, to serve the American cause; for when he has taken anything into his head it is impossible to resist him."

He also wrote at this time an affectionate, and playful letter to his wife, in which he pours forth every feeling of his heart, with the frank impulsiveness of a child. In speaking of the battle of Brandywine, he says: "I must now give you a lesson, as wife of an American general officer. They will say to you, 'They have been beaten.' You must answer—'That is true; but when two armies of *equal number* meet in the field, old soldiers have naturally the advantage over new ones; they have, besides, had the pleasure of killing a great many of the enemy, many more than they have lost.' They will afterwards add, 'All that is very well; but Philadelphia is taken, the capital of America, the rampart of liberty.' You must politely answer, 'You are all great fools! Philadelphia is a poor forlorn town, exposed on every side, whose harbor was already closed, though the residence of Congress lent it, I know not why, some degree of celebrity.' This is the famous city, which, be it added, we will sooner or later, make them yield back to us."



In October, while his wound was still unhealed, he joined the army at Whitemarsh. Soon after, Greene was sent by Washington to operate against Cornwallis, then in New Jersey; and Lafayette, though unable yet to wear a boot, requested to accompany him as a volunteer. Having obtained permission to take with him three hundred and fifty men, and reconnoitre—he left the main body, and came up with Cornwallis at Gloucester, opposite Philadelphia. Advancing out on a sandy point to obtain a better view, he was discovered by the British commander, and a detachment of dragoons immediately sent to cut him off—but taking a back road, he escaped them, and passing within two miles of the enemy's camp, came upon an outpost of four hundred Hessians. Without a moment's delay, he led his raw militia so furiously to the attack, that the whole detachment gave way. He pursued them to within a half mile of the main body, killing and wounding fifty or sixty of them, and then retired in safety. Lafayette was delighted with the behavior of his men on this occasion, saying, in his letter to Washington, that he “found the riflemen even above their reputation—and the militia above all his expectations.” “I must tell, too,” he added “that the riflemen had been the whole day running before my horse, without eating or taking any rest.” This brilliant little affair contributed much to bring about an event, which had troubled Washington exceedingly. Lafayette had requested to be given the command of a division, and the former had written frequently to Congress about it; but the appointment,

for various reasons, was delayed. A resolve, however, was finally passed, recommending him to be placed over a division of the Continental army; and the Virginia troops, hitherto under General Stephens, were given him.

The sufferings of Valley Forge followed this campaign; and Lafayette, notwithstanding his wealth and the comforts to which he had been accustomed, cheerfully shared with the officers their privations—and entering at once into our feelings, adopted our dress and customs, and thus completely wound himself into our affections. Everybody loved him, and from one end of the land to the other, his name was ever coupled with blessings.

I have spoken elsewhere of the Conway cabal, by which it was sought to place Gates over Washington, and of the effort to draw Lafayette into it, by appointing him commander of the expedition to be fitted out against Canada. The plan was laid with skill, for the authors of it knew that nothing could be more agreeable to the French nobleman than to wrest the former province of his country from the hands of the English. Finding, however, that his attachment could not be shaken, the contemptible Board of War, and still more contemptible faction in Congress, concluded it was best to abandon the project altogether; and in March, Lafayette returned from Albany, where he had been making arrangements for it, to Valley Forge.

Here, on the 5th of May, arrived the intelligence of the alliance of France with us; and the most unbounded joy prevailed throughout the camp and the

nation. Lafayette had contributed much to secure this result, which at once gave permanency to our struggle. His letters to his friends, high in favor, and to Government—the enthusiasm with which he followed our fortunes, had all combined to make our cause popular with the entire French nation.

A day of general rejoicing was set apart to commemorate the event, and amid the gloomy huts of Valley Forge went up a loud huzza, that from that time on scarce ever died away, till the united shout of a ransomed people shook the world.\*

\* The following is the general order issued by Washington on that occasion:—

*“Head Quarters, Camp Valley Forge,  
May 5th, 1778.*

“It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe propitiously to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally, by raising us up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence on a lasting foundation; it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the Divine goodness, and celebrating the important event which we owe to His benign interposition.

“The several brigades are to be assembled for this purpose at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, when their chaplains will communicate the intelligence contained in the Postscript to the Pennsylvania Gazette of the second instant, and offer up a thanksgiving, and deliver a discourse suitable to the occasion.

“At half-past ten o'clock a cannon will be fired, which is to be a signal for the men to be under arms. The brigade inspectors will then inspect their dress and arms, form the battalions according to the instructions given them, and announce to the commanding officers of brigades that the battalions are formed. The brigadiers and commandants will then appoint the field officers to command the battalions; after which, each battalion will be ordered to load and ground their arms. At half-past eleven, another cannon will be fired as a signal for the march; on which the several brigades will begin their march by wheeling to the right by platoons, and proceed by the nearest way to the left of their ground, in the new position that will be

## AFFAIR OF BARREN HILL

On the 18th of May, Washington, having heard that the British were making preparations to evacuate Philadelphia, detached Lafayette with two thousand men and five pieces of cannon, to watch their motions, and protect the country from the incursions of marauding parties. Crossing the Schuylkill, the latter took post on Barren Hill, about half way between Valley Forge and Philadelphia, or nine miles from each, and stationed his pickets so as to prevent surprise. But information of his movements was conveyed to Sir Henry Clinton, in Philadelphia, by a spy, and a force sufficient to crush three such detachments immediately sent out against him. It was designed to take him by surprise, and, cutting off his retreat, oblige him to surrender. On the morning of the 19th, the English commander put his troops in motion—advancing in three columns. One of these, five thousand strong, ascended the Schuylkill, and threw itself directly in rear of Lafayette. There were two fords by which the Marquis could cross the river, and to each of these one of the columns was directed, while Howe marched with an overwhelming force to attack him in front. The whole affair

pointed out by the brigade inspectors. A third signal will be given, on which there will be a discharge of thirteen cannon; when the thirteenth has fired, a running fire of the infantry will begin on the right of Woodford's, and continue throughout the whole front line; it will then be taken up on the left of the second line and continue to the right. On a signal given, the whole army will huzza—*Long live the King of France!* ”

had been planned with such secrecy that the enemy never doubted of success, and Howe had promised to bring Lafayette with him to dinner next day. When the sun rose in the morning, his promise bid fair to be fulfilled. A spectacle, alarming enough to appall an older heart than Lafayette's, met his gaze as he looked off from his height. Between him and the Schuylkill, and Valley Forge, lay an immense army—one portion commanding completely one ford, the other occupying a hill, from which it could descend like a torrent on his line of march for the remaining passage, while in front was rapidly advancing the main body, to attack him. Owing to the neglect or treachery of the Pennsylvania picket, he had received no intimation of all these movements till they were completed. In a moment the drums beat to arms, while far in the distance was heard the report of cannon. Washington, from his camp, had discovered the advance of the British almost as soon as Lafayette, and filled with anxiety for the flower of his troops, ordered alarm-guns to be fired, and the whole army to stand to their arms. He himself, with several of his officers, ascended a hill, and gazed anxiously through his glass towards the Schuylkill.

But Lafayette was already in motion. His quick eye took in at a glance the extent of the danger that surrounded him, and he immediately adopted the only course that could have saved him. The enemy was in force in front, and the ford in his rear, which lay on the direct road to Valley Forge, was too strongly defended to be attacked. The other ford alone remained to him, the road to which was com-

manded by Grant, with five thousand veteran troops. On this, however, he boldly and rapidly marched. But to deceive the British officer, he sent out small detachments to manœuvre in a piece of woods in front of him, as if his purpose was not to reach the ford, but assail his position. False heads of columns were organized, which, protruding themselves through the trees, caused Grant to suppose the whole American army was advancing against him; and so, instead of cutting off Lafayette's line of march, he halted where he was, and formed in order of battle. In the meantime Lafayette, covered by the woods, kept swiftly and noiselessly on his way, passing directly beneath the hill, on which his enemy was posted; and, while the latter was wondering why those columns, the heads of which he had seen, did not advance—reached the ford in safety. These sham columns then hastily retreated, and joined the main army; and Washington saw with inexpressible delight, his boy-general, whom he loved, draw up his troops in order of battle on the side of the river opposite the enemy. He had extricated himself with consummate ability, losing only nine men in all, and even for these making the enemy pay nearly double. This small affair gave him great reputation as a skilful and self-collected officer. ✓

He arrived the same day at Valley Forge, and was received with shouts and huzzas—while the English Army marched sullenly back to Philadelphia.\*

\* A curious incident occurred in the morning when the pickets of the two armies first came together. Fifty English dragoons suddenly came upon fifty Indians belonging to the



About this time Lafayette received the news of the death of his oldest daughter, which afflicted him deeply.

In the following month occurred the battle of Monmouth, in the description of which, in a preceding sketch, I have spoken of the generosity of Lafayette, in giving up his command to Lee, at the request of the latter. Had he *retained* it, there is but little doubt that a signal victory would have been won. But being a subordinate in command, he was compelled to obey the vacillating orders of this uncertain man. While Lee was manœuvring in front of the enemy—now directing Lafayette to advance, and now to retreat, the latter saw a party of British troops on the right flank, so far advanced from the main body, that he thought it could easily be cut off, and galloping up to Lee, asked permission to attack it. “Sir,” said the latter, “you do not know British soldiers; we cannot stand against them; we shall certainly be driven back at first, and we must be cautious.” Lafayette replied, “It may be so; but British soldiers have been beaten, and it is to be presumed they may be again—at all events, *I would like to make the trial.*” He was forbidden, however, and Lee began that shameful retreat, which robbed us of our victory, and well-nigh secured our ruin.

When the burning sun of that terrible day disappeared behind the western hills, and the exhausted

American army, lying in ambush. The savages, frightened at the presence of the horsemen, suddenly started up, and giving one terrific yell, fled like deer. The dragoons, equally alarmed by this unexpected apparition, also turned and fled, never stopping till they reached Philadelphia.



armies sunk on the scorching earth, young Lafayette lay down beside Washington, and the tired chieftain wrapped him affectionately in his own mantle. For a while they lay awake, and talked over the events of the day, and especially the conduct of Lee, until at length, overtasked nature gave way, and the two heroes and patriots slept.

The French fleet arriving in July, and a descent on Rhode Island being resolved upon, Lafayette was sent with two brigades, to the aid of Sullivan. He used all the means in his power to induce the French admiral to remain and co-operate in the attack, but in vain; and when the latter sailed for Boston, to refit, repaired thither himself, by land. While there, hearing that Sullivan had been attacked, he immediately started off, and travelling ten miles an hour, for eight hours, arrived in time to bring off the rear-guard to the main land.

For the untiring efforts he put forth on this occasion, and especially for the service he rendered, as mediator between the offended admiral and our government, he received the warmest thanks of both Congress and Washington. The former, through its president, Laurens, sent him its acknowledgments. The reply of Lafayette was frank, and full of feeling. In it occurs the following sentence, which must endear him to every American. "*The moment I heard of America, I loved her; the moment I knew she was fighting for freedom, I burned with a desire of bleeding for her; and the moment I shall be able to serve her, at any time, or in any part of the world, will be the happiest one of my life.*"

Soon after this, he challenged Lord Carlisle, president of the Board of British Commissioners, for having said, in his correspondence with Congress, that France, in her alliance with us, was "guilty of perfidy," &c. Washington endeavored to dissuade him from this act, but the latter felt that his nation was insulted, and as one of her representatives here, he ought to resent it. The challenge was declined, and Lafayette afterwards confessed that he had done wrong.

Having now been in the country fifteen months, he wished to return home to visit his family, as well as obtain more aid for the country of his adoption. Fortified with letters from Congress, and bearing testimonials of the esteem and parental love of Washington, he started for Boston. But at Fishkill he was seized with a fever, which prostrated him for three weeks, and for a while threatened seriously his life.

At length, after many delays, he set sail on the 11th of January, 1779, in the frigate *Alliance*, which had been assigned him by Congress. He had, however, escaped from sickness only to encounter still greater danger. On the banks of Newfoundland a fearful storm overtook them, which partially dismasted the vessel, and left her half-filled with water. They were scarcely out of this before another arose. The English and Irish sailors, who had been engaged in Boston, formed a conspiracy to murder the passengers, and, seizing the vessel, carry her into an English port. The plot was discovered only an hour before the time fixed upon for putting it into execution.

On his arrival in France, Lafayette was banished from the court, because he had presumed to leave the kingdom in disobedience of the orders of government. Eight days, however, served to dissipate the royal displeasure. The queen, Maria Antoinette, immediately took a deep interest in him, and he became the talk, and favorite of the city. Everybody spoke of his enthusiasm—his devotion to liberty, and his chivalric feelings. The queen procured for him the command of a regiment of the king's dragoons; and was so struck with his enthusiastic love for Washington, that she afterwards remarked to Dr. Franklin: "Do you know, doctor, that Lafayette has really made me in love with your General Washington? What a man he must be, and what a friend he possesses in the Marquis."

In the meantime he planned a descent on the west coast of England—the land forces to be under his command, and the fleet under that of Paul Jones. It was, however, abandoned; and he then turned all his efforts to obtain aid for America. He spent his own fortune as freely as water; and at length by his unwearied efforts and sacrifices, obtained twelve battalions of infantry—in all six thousand men, with a proportionate artillery force—and six ships-of-the-line, together with the requisite number of transports. These were the troops who pressed so gallantly, with us, the siege of Yorktown.

Having accomplished this, he set sail himself to join the American army as one of its officers. When he arrived in Boston, all the bells of the town were set ringing—salvos of cannon were fired, and

shouts and acclamations followed him on his way to the house of President Hancock. Hastening on to head-quarters, Washington received him with open arms, and embraced him as a son, and the whole army shouted, "LONG LIVE LAFAYETTE." Remaining here but a few days, he hurried to Philadelphia to confer with Congress—greeted everywhere with acclamations. He was the people's friend—and tears of joy fell at the mention of his name.

The fleet at length arrived, and he was sent to Newport to receive it; and a campaign began to open, which promised scenes of stirring interest. After several demonstrations on the part of the French and British—of the latter against Newport, and the former on New York—resulting in nothing—Lafayette repaired to head-quarters, and took command of a corps of light infantry, numbering two thousand men, who had been selected from the different regiments, on purpose for him. They were fine-looking soldiers, but without clothing. The Marquis, proud of them, furnished the entire corps with uniforms at his own expense; and presented every officer in it with a sword, and the separate battalions with standards. The first time they were reviewed in their new dress, and under their gay standards, they presented a splendid appearance; and were a body of troops, of which any commander might be proud. Lafayette's eye ran along their lines with delight, and he seemed willing to take the very coat from his back for their benefit. This affection was returned, for he was idolized by the whole corps.

While Washington was thus hovering around New York, and the French were blockaded in Newport, news arrived of the utter rout of Gates at Camden.

Lafayette was annoyed exceedingly by the inactivity which marked the campaign, and again and again besought Washington to let him attack some of the more northern posts of the English at New York; but that skilful commander knew that the hour for striking had not yet arrived—and at length the army went into winter-quarters, and the fine corps of the Marquis was disbanded.

The next year, however, a great part of it was re-organized and put under its old commander, who was ordered to Virginia, to repel the invasion of Arnold. Of the failure of the attempt to take the traitor, and the return of Lafayette, I have already spoken in my sketch of Steuben. His whole management in this expedition was excellent. But when Cornwallis directed his steps North, the Marquis was again ordered in all haste to the South. The soldiers, however, were averse to going, and began to desert in such numbers, that his army threatened to dwindle to a mere handful. In this dilemma he appealed to the honor of his troops, saying, “they had been ordered against a superior enemy—that the confidence of the government in their patriotism and virtue, their general, at least, would not violate—and was determined to march against the enemy. As for them,” he said, “they need not desert—he would save them that disgrace and crime—and those who wished to leave, had only to apply to head-

quarters for a pass, and it should be granted." Strange as it may seem, this checked entirely desertion. Lafayette sympathized with the distressed condition of his troops; and unable to obtain any supplies from government, borrowed ten thousand dollars from the merchants of Baltimore on his own credit, all of which he expended in shirts and shoes, &c., for the soldiers. Murmuring and complaints, gave place to enthusiasm and love; and his little army closed round him like a band of brothers. Advancing south he reached Richmond, and drove General Philips down the river. This officer dying, the command devolved on Arnold, who sent a letter to Lafayette—but the latter refused to hold any correspondence with a traitor.

Cornwallis finally effected a junction with Arnold, and the Marquis was compelled to retreat. Then commenced a series of brilliant manœuvres, which did infinite credit to the generalship of the young commander. Cornwallis had been driven about by Greene, like a man wandering in his sleep, but he now supposed himself in front of a different antagonist, and wrote, saying, "*the boy cannot escape me.*" But the boy did escape him, retiring slowly before the overwhelming force pressing upon him, and watching every movement with a vigilance nothing could elude.

At length Cornwallis advanced towards Albemarle courthouse, in order to destroy the magazines placed there for the Southern army. Lafayette penetrated his plans, but was unable, from the feebleness of his force, to thwart them. But at this critical juncture,



Wayne arrived with his corps of Pennsylvanians, which emboldened him to make an attempt to save the magazines. Taking a cross road, he suddenly threw himself in front of the British commander, prepared, inferior though he was in numbers, to give him battle. The latter, seeing his antagonist strongly posted, and being made aware of the reinforcements he had received, declined the offered engagement, and began to retreat. Lafayette immediately gave chase, and overtaking his rear-guard at Williamsburgh, killed and wounded a hundred and sixty men, with the loss to himself of less than forty. Thus for a hundred miles did he pursue Cornwallis, and by his boldness and apparent eagerness for an engagement, effectually blind him as to the real strength of his army. Fooled into a disastrous retreat, the British commander kept retiring till he came to Jamestown, where occurred the gallant charge of Wayne, with merely a detachment, on the whole English army. When, from the heavy firing, Lafayette, who was in the rear with the main body, was made aware of the danger of Wayne, he came on a swift gallop to his aid, and, with his usual recklessness of his life, and deaf to the remonstrances of his officers, spurred where the volleys were heaviest, and had two horses shot under him.

He at length forced Cornwallis into York, where he entrenched himself. The plan was then formed to hem him in seaward with the French fleet, while Washington, at the head of the allied army, should hasten to form a junction with Lafayette. But it was necessary, in the meantime, that "*the boy*"



should keep the old soldier he had so completely outwitted, shut up in his retreat, until these forces could be transported South. Cornwallis saw his danger, and at one time thought seriously of retreating into North Carolina, which he could have done. But Lafayette, by his extraordinary exertions, succeeded in keeping him at bay. He called in the militia to guard all the passages, and had his spies in the very heart of the English camp.\*

The siege and capture of Yorktown followed. During its progress, it was necessary to storm two redoubts. The attacks on both were to be made simultaneously—that of the right being intrusted to Lafayette, at the head of American troops, and the one on the left to the Baron Viomenil, with four

\* Sparks relates an anecdote received from Lafayette too good to be omitted. The Marquis wished to send a spy into the English army, not only to obtain information, but deceive the commander; and Morgan, a Jerseyman, was pointed out to him as a proper person. The brave soldier was ready for any peril for his country, but he hated the character of a spy. He did not care for his life, he said, but for his name. At length, receiving a solemn promise that if he was hung a full account of the matter should be published in the New Jersey papers, he consented, and went over to the enemy. Cornwallis soon sent for him, and in the presence of Tarleton, asked what means Lafayette had of crossing James river. He replied, that he had boats sufficient to transport his whole army across at a moment's warning. Cornwallis, turning to Tarleton, said, "In that case, what I said to you cannot be done;" referring evidently to the projected retreat south. At length, one day, after the arrival of the fleet, Lafayette found in his quarters six men dressed in the English uniform. Morgan had returned, bringing five deserters and a prisoner with him. The brave fellow was offered the rank of sergeant for his behavior, but he refused it, as he did every other offer. The only favor he would ask was the restoration of his gun, which had been lost during his absence. It was found and returned to him.

hundred French grenadiers. The French officer, in speaking of it, intimated that the Americans were not so good as French troops for work of this kind, to which Lafayette simply replied: "*We shall see.*" At length the storming parties were arranged, Colonel Hamilton leading the van of that under the Marquis. The signal to advance was to be two shells fired—one from the American and the other from the French battery. First the shell arose from the American battery, and the moment the flaming missile reached the zenith, that of the French mounted the heavens, and then the shout "advance," rang along the steady columns. Hamilton, in his headlong courage, never waited for the abatis to be removed, but rushing over it, mounted the parapet with only three men by his side. Gazing back one moment on his crowding followers, with his sword waving over his head, he summoned them on, and then leaped into the ditch. With a loud and thrilling shout, the brave fellows stormed after their intrepid leader, who still far in advance, was for a moment lost sight of, and thought to have fallen. But he was soon seen in the centre of the redoubt, forming his men. Not a shot had been fired—the naked steel had done it all, and in nine minutes' time. The Americans carried their redoubt first, and Lafayette remembering what Viomenil had said, sent him word that he had succeeded, and asked if the aid of the Americans was not needed. The latter replied, "Tell Lafayette that I have not yet carried my redoubt, but shall do so in five minutes." He made good his word.

After the capitulation of Yorktown, Lafayette again returned to France, loaded with eulogies from Washington and Congress. The French king offered him the rank of field-marshal in his army, and honors clustered thick around the youthful brows of the noble champion of liberty.

In the meantime a powerful armament was fitting out in France and Spain in our behalf, and Lafayette was appointed chief of the staff of the combined armies. But England, at length, reluctantly consented to acknowledge our independence—and gave up her vast possessions, which had cost her so much treasure and blood. When the Marquis first heard the news of it, he despatched a vessel, the *Triumph*, to bring it to this country. He wished to accompany it—to be himself the bearer of the glad tidings, and mingle his joy with that of a ransomed people; but the Spanish court having refused to receive our chargé, Mr. Carmichael, he hastened to Madrid to reconcile the difficulties, and in a few days succeeded in putting things on the most amicable footing. Thus, ever ready to sacrifice his own feelings or pleasure for America, he undertook this unpleasant journey, instead of coming to our arms, to be bedewed with our tears, and covered with our blessings. Washington, in an affectionate letter to him, says, “Your going to Madrid from thence,\* instead of coming immediately to this country, is another instance, my dear Marquis, of your zeal for the American cause; and lays a fresh claim to the grati-

\* Referring to Cadiz, where he was superintending the preparations of the new armament fitting out for our relief.

tude of her sons, who will always receive you with open arms."

In 1784, Lafayette, anxious once more to see Washington, again embarked for this country. He was received with every mark of respect, and pressed with invitations in every city—but in eleven days after his arrival he was in the arms of Washington at Mount Vernon. He remained at the latter place fourteen days; and the intercourse of these two noble and affectionate men, must ever remain one of those touching incidents which are never revealed to the common gaze. They had pressed shoulder to shoulder together through the battle—slept in the same cloak on the dreadful field of Monmouth—had suffered and rejoiced together—and now they stood side by side, and gazed on the land they had freed; and saw, with the joy patriots only know, a happy people reposing under the tree of liberty.

He arrived in this country in August, and having visited his old battle-fields, and traversed a large part of the country, set sail again in December, for France.

His farewell to Congress was impressive. That body had passed a resolution, expressing the gratitude and affection of this country for him. He closed up his reply with, "May this immense temple of freedom ever stand as a lesson to oppressors, an example for the oppressed, a sanctuary for the rights of mankind! and, may these happy United States attain that complete splendor and prosperity, which will illustrate the blessings of their government; and, for ages to come, rejoice the departed souls of their

founders." Washington accompanied him as far as Annapolis, and afterwards wrote him a farewell letter, full of simplicity and affection—and it is hard to say, whether it honors him or Lafayette most.

After his return, he labored arduously to establish such commercial regulations for us, as would be for our own advantage; and never lost sight of our welfare or interest.

In 1785 he visited Austria, Prussia, and Germany; and was everywhere received, by monarchs and nobles, with the highest honors. Frederic the Great presented him with his miniature, set in diamonds—complimenting him on his distinguished services in America, and, at the same time, expressing his great admiration of Washington.

I cannot give an account of his efforts for the emancipation of the blacks, in which he was seconded by Washington, Patrick Henry, Laurens, Jefferson, and others, nor of the interest he took in the cause of the French Protestants. Hating despotism whether it took the form of unjust taxation, domestic slavery, or religious intolerance—he showed throughout that he had been in the school of Washington, and lived respected by all.

But now he was destined to enter upon a new scene—on a succession of tragedies never before enacted on this earth—the *French Revolution*. It is impossible to go into an account of this terrific event, or trace out its causes. France, burdened with debt, taxed to death, and starving, needed help, and an assembly of Notables was convoked, to deliberate on the means to be adopted. Of this Lafayette was a

member, and boldly taking ground for reform in every department of government, moved, among other things, the convocation of the States General—which consisted of representatives from the three orders—the nobility, clergy, and untitled middle classes. This extraordinary body assembled, and the great struggle commenced. The Commons wished the three orders to constitute one assembly, to which the haughty clergy and nobility refused their assent. Lafayette, though one of the nobles, sustained manfully the request of the *tiers etat*, or lower order. Months passed away in this contest, until at last the Commons resolved to constitute themselves *the* National Assembly of France, and did so.

This was the first revolution. The Marquis then boldly separated himself from the nobility, and joined the Assembly, of which he was soon after chosen vice-president. The famous “*declaration of rights*,” which is a mere epitome of our Declaration of Independence, was presented by him, and France moved tumultuously towards a republic. He sat in the Assembly at Versailles on that terrible night, when the attack upon it by the troops was expected—firmly resolved to fall at his post. In the meantime, the Bastile fell, and the great key of that stronghold was sent by him to Washington.

In the midst of this gathering of the elements, Lafayette, by permission of the king, organized the National Guard, and placed upon them the “tri-colored cockade.” In announcing the event to the Assembly, he made the following remarkable declaration: “Gentlemen, I bring you a cockade which shall make



the tour of the world; and an institution at once civic and military, which shall change the system of European tactics, and reduce all absolute governments to the alternative of being beaten if they do not imitate it, or of being overthrown if they dare oppose it." Bold prophecy, half of which has already been fulfilled. With this guard he succeeded in restoring partial order in the city—but the torrent was only arrested, not dried up. Women, beating drums through the streets and crying "bread," thrilled every heart, and rolled into wilder motion the already excited passions of the people.

#### STORMING OF VERSAILLES

From May till October, had the national representatives struggled to save France. Met at every turn by the court and aristocracy, surrounded with obstacles their enemies had constantly thrown in their path, and compelled to spend months on the plainest principles of human liberty and justice, they had been utterly unable to relieve the public distress. For this they were not to blame, but the selfish, blind, higher orders. Everything had been compelled to wait but famine. *That* had never wavered nor faltered, but, with ever-increasing proportions and frightful mien, had stalked over the land, turning women into tigers, and men into fiends.

Suddenly there is a strange and confused uproar on the road from Paris to Versailles. An army of women is on the march for the king's palace. All efforts to disband them have been powerless; and



Lafayette, after attempting in vain to keep back the National Guard of 30,000 men, who demand with loud cries to accompany them, is compelled to yield, and they too go thundering along the road. Armed with pikes, hatchets, and sticks pointed with iron, this motley crowd march on foot through the drenching rain, measuring the weary leagues with aching limbs, and at length stream around the magnificent palace of Versailles. Wild faces look out from dishevelled hair, and haggard features, more fearful than the swaying pikes, move amid this confusion of sexes and hurricane of passion. With eyes upturned to where their monarch dwells, they suddenly shriek out in wild concord, "BREAD!" God in heaven! what a cry from women to their king! Regardless of the falling rain and approaching night, and their toilsome journey, those strange faces are still turned to him who alone can relieve their distress. At length, twelve are conducted as deputies, into the presence of the king. One, young and beautiful, overwhelmed at her own boldness, in thus approaching her monarch, can only faintly utter the word "*bread*, and swoons at his feet." Here was woe, here was suffering, sufficient to bring tears from stones.

Bread was ordered to be distributed to this famished multitude, but was not, and they wandered about searching in vain for means to alleviate their hunger, till at length they came upon a dead horse, and began in savage ferocity to tear out his entrails, and devour his flesh. Tumult was again abroad, and shots were fired from the palace on the crowd, which

rush in return up the marble steps, and stream through the royal apartments, demanding blood. But the adored Lafayette is seen moving amid the multitude, and the storm is stayed, and the king is saved. All night long he moved about amid the disorderly crew, to calm their excitement; and at five o'clock, lay down with his clothes on to snatch a moment's repose. But the first fierce shout brought him to his feet, and, springing on the first horse he found, he burst in a furious gallop among the mob, who were butchering the Life Guards. Having rescued them and sent them away, he suddenly found himself alone in presence of one of the murderers, who was aiming his carbine at him. Undismayed, Lafayette ordered the culprit to be brought to him. The awe-struck mob obeyed, and seizing him, dashed out his brains on the pavement. He then hastened to the palace, and the Life Guards, whom he had saved, received him with shouts of "*Lafayette forever.*" Leading the king forth upon the balcony, he presented him, and afterwards the queen, to the people, kissing her majesty's hand in their presence, while "Vive la Reine!" "Vive Lafayette!" rent the air. The next morning, the shout, "To Paris!" was heard, and Louis was compelled, with his family, to take this wild escort to the capital. The tiger was changed into the fiend. The excitement of the day before—the hunger and murder of the night, and the strange spectacle of the morning, had completely unsettled what little reason the rabble had left, and the procession they form for the king—their furious shouts and bacchanalian songs, and disorderly move-

ment as they carry a gory head aloft on a pike, making it nod and bow to the multitude in grim salutation, are enough to appall the stoutest heart. Kingship is ended—reverence is gone, and all after-respect and loyalty will be but the spasmodic flame of the dying lamp—*Vive le roi! Vive le nation! Vive Lafayette!* are alike incoherent and trustless. But fondly believing that France could follow in the steps of America, the intrepid Lafayette moved at the head of his faithful troops, preserving order, and guiding with his steady hand the car of the revolution towards a safe goal.

At length a confederation of the entire realm was resolved upon; to take place on the anniversary of the overthrow of the Bastile.

#### SCENE IN THE CHAMP DE MARS

The world never exhibited such a scene as the Field of Mars presented, previous to, and at this grand celebration. An area of three hundred thousand square feet was to be scooped out, and fitted up with balconies, seats, &c.; while a grand altar, on a base twenty feet high, was to be erected in the centre. There were but fifteen days, in which to make all this preparation, and fifteen thousand men were therefore set to work. A mighty army toiled on that open field; but their united efforts were soon seen to be insufficient to complete the work in time. The excited populace, determined not to be disappointed, and carried away by an enthusiasm, as sudden as it was fearful, then volunteered their labor. In a mo-

ment that enthusiasm became madness; and from every quarter came streaming the shouting, singing multitude. Young girls, with green boughs, and tri-color streamers, marched at the head of columns of men with spades and pickaxes on their shoulders, singing as they advanced. Beautiful women, throwing aside their hats and shawls, seized the wheelbarrows, and with dishevelled locks, toiled on beside the brawny laborers—gay young men stripped to the task—whole families dashed into the area—the great, the noble, and the learned came, and shouted and heaved away, till a hundred and fifty thousand of all ages, and sexes, and conditions, were gathered in one mighty throng, working and singing on in the July sun. The whole city turned out—advocates and judges—nuns from the convent, with singers from the opera seized the spade or barrow; and amid the deafening strain of *Ca ira*—the work went bravely on. “Beautifullest Hebes, the loveliest in Paris, in their light air-robcs, with ribbon girdles of tri-color, are there;—shovelling and wheeling with the rest; their Hebe-eyes brightening with enthusiasm, and long hair, in beautiful dishevelment—hard pressed are their small fingers; but they make the patriot barrow go, and even force it to the summit of the slope, (with a little tracing which, what man’s arm were not too happy to lend?) then bound down with it again, and go for more; with their long locks and tri-colors blown back—graceful as the rosy hours.”\* Lafayette came and looked on; and the king, at last, carried away by this whirlwind of feeling, also

\* *Vide* Carlyle’s “French Revolution.”

comes, and spades are lifted on high, and "*Vive le roi*" rends the air.

Such was the scene which the last night previous to the grand celebration, presented; and never did the setting sun throw his farewell beams on a stranger spectacle. Paris was mad, crazy; and the whole population in a frenzy of excitement. But, at length, the crowd began slowly to retire to their homes, and the Champ de Mars was deserted. The next morning the multitude again assembled, in their gayest apparel; and soon three hundred thousand men and women crowded that vast amphitheatre. A hundred thousand men accompanied Lafayette and the king in joyful procession.

Mounted on a splendid white charger, the Marquis enters this spacious area, with sixty thousand troops; while the braying of trumpets, and shouts of ten times ten thousand voices, make the very heavens reel. Three hundred priests stand at the four corners of the altar, and celebrate mass, amid the pealing of trumpets and thunder of cannon. A sudden silence succeeds the uproar, and the deep breathing of that vast throng, is like the sigh of the sea. Lafayette then moves forward, and is borne from his steed on the shoulders of grenadiers, to the altar, and placing the point of his sword upon it, swears to defend the constitution to the last. The thunder of artillery, and shouts of the people answer. The king then advances, and with the queen in the background, holding her infant son in her arms, repeats the solemn oath. A thousand standards are lowered at once—the cannon again roar forth their stern ap-

proval; and such a shout goes up, as never before shook the earth—" *France is free!* " rings out on every side, and universal joy fills the heart of the nation.

Lafayette was greater than the king on this day; and every eye looked to him as the saviour of his country.

It is impossible, in this brief sketch, to follow him through all the scenes of the revolution. Firm—mild—his integrity undoubted, and his republicanism unquestioned, he moved for awhile like an ark of safety, amid this sudden and fearful deluge. At the head of his thirty-thousand troops, he carried more authority with him than the king or Assembly.

The next year a revolt broke out in the Champ de Mars, which he no sooner heard of, than he marched to quell it with twelve hundred grenadiers. On his way, a traitor in the ranks fired a pistol at him, but missed his aim. When he came up to the crowd, he ordered them to disperse, but only received a shower of stones in reply. Firing a volley over their heads with no better success, he ordered a volley point-blank, which brought down a hundred men, and dispersed the rest. These energetic measures awed the insurgents, and had they been followed up, would have prevented the reign of terror. But unsustained by the royal authority, he could not carry out the measures he knew to be indispensable to the safety of France, and so the revolution went rolling forward to that awful gulf into which it at last sunk.

At the close of the constituent Assembly, he resigned his command of the National Guard, and



retired to private life. But when the war broke out with Austria, he was appointed one of the three commanders of the French army, and hastened to the frontiers on the Rhine. All this time he kept up a constant correspondence with Washington.

While he was here straining every nerve to save the honor of the French army, he heard of that disgusting scene enacted by thirty thousand men and women in the hall of the Assembly, and the after insult offered to the king in the Tuileries; and immediately hastened to Paris. Denouncing the Jacobins, the authors of these outrages, he made one more desperate effort to save the revolution; and earnestly besought the king to let him break up the Jacobin club, that nest of vipers. But his request was refused, and the besotted monarch, too proud to resign, and too weak to rule, let this mob power have way, till it usurped the government. Lafayette then attempted to save the royal family, offering to conduct them out of the kingdom. They refusing his generous proposal, he hastened back to the army, determined to wait the issue of things. He saw clearly the tempest that was gathering, but knew it was now too late to arrest it. He had done all he could, and but for the imbecile king, would have saved all.

Soon after the insurrection of the 10th of August took place; the Tuileries ran blood, and amid the storm and terror of that day, the Bourbon dynasty closed. The Jacobins seized the reins of government, and immediately sent commissioners to the army, announcing the change in affairs. But La-



fayette would not receive them, and ordered them to be imprisoned. He was in turn accused as a traitor, and measures set on foot to arrest him. Deserted by his associate generals, and seeing that the army was going also, he determined to abandon France and seek an asylum in this country, where liberty could be enjoyed without anarchy. But being seized on his way by the Austrian authorities, he was treated as a prisoner of war. It is true, the magnanimous despots of Austria and Prussia offered him freedom if he would renounce his republican principles. Refusing to do this, he was cast into a dungeon, and after being tossed about from prison to prison, by those royal villains—who, destitute alike of honor or of truth, coolly covered themselves with infamy in presence of the civilized world—was transferred to the gloomy dungeons of Olmutz, in Austria. Of the sympathy this act of atrocity awakened in the bosoms of all true men—of the efforts of Washington and other Americans in his behalf, and the noble devotion of his wife, who shared his imprisonment, I shall say nothing. The noble attempt made by J. Errick Bollman, a German physician, and Francis Huger, son of Colonel Huger, of South Carolina, at whose house Lafayette was first received on his arrival in this country, have rendered their names immortal. These men of heroic virtue, were thrown into prison for their bold and well-nigh successful effort, where they languished for eight months. After their release, they still exerted themselves in behalf of Lafayette, though without success.

In the meantime, the young Napoleon had

mounted to power, and was rolling the revolutionary earthquake under the thrones of Europe. He smote Austria hip and thigh in Italy; and at the peace of Leoben, made one of the chief stipulations, the release of Lafayette from imprisonment. With much reluctance it was acceded to, though the perfidious government endeavored first to make their prisoner promise to go to America, never to return. This the indignant patriot firmly refused to do, even to terminate his long imprisonment. The king delaying and deferring, young Bonaparte gave him to understand in the most peremptory manner, that unless the Marquis was immediately released, he would soon hear the thunder of his cannon. This argument was understood; and Lafayette, after having suffered five years a close and cruel confinement, was at length permitted to go abroad. This first effort of Napoleon's power, does him more honor than his victories. After his release, Lafayette went first to Holstein, and afterwards to Holland; where he remained till the revolution, which made Napoleon First Consul for life; and then, under his mighty ægis, returned to France, and received his old rank in the army. He was attached to the First Consul, and well he might be, for he owed him liberty, and the restoration to his old honors and home. Still he was not a person to sympathize with the fierce tempestuous character that was to upset the world; and Bonaparte felt that Lafayette was a man of a past age, and could effect nothing in carrying out his stupendous plans. Nevertheless, he revered his virtues, and endeavored to bind him to his interests, but the latter gradually re-

tired to private life; and when the former began his rapid strides towards supreme power, wrote him a plain kind letter, asking for guaranties of the liberties of the people. This letter was never answered, and the writer was well-nigh forgotten in the wondrous events that succeeded. In the retirement of La Grange he listened to the thunder and tumult that accompanied Napoleon's progress; saw the century-bound despotisms of Europe shaking, like cedars in a tempest as his mighty hand swept over them, and heard the sound of falling thrones, with feelings of mingled wonder and distrust. It seemed a strange dream through which he had passed—from the bright dawns of liberty, his country had sunk into the darkest night that ever shrouded a nation, and then suddenly risen into a vast empire, from whose presence the world shrank in dismay. It was natural, in this confusion of all things at home, he should turn his thoughts to the peaceful Republic he had helped to rear on this side of the water. He made known his intentions to Washington, but political considerations induced the latter to request him to defer his visit, and he continued to live in retirement. But when Jefferson became president, he offered him the governorship of Louisiana, which was declined.

At length the star of Napoleon went down; but before the nation had time to compose itself, it rose again on the troubled world. At his second assumption of imperial power, Bonaparte endeavored to win Lafayette over to his interests, but the latter stubbornly refused to accept a seat in his new Chamber of Peers—preferring to act as one of the deputies.

After the battle of Waterloo, he took strong ground against the emperor; and was one of those who procured his abdication. Mindful, however, of his former kindness to him, when a prisoner at Olmutz, he endeavored to stipulate for his personal safety and liberty. At the restoration of the Bourbons, he solemnly warned them against any attempts to revive old despotisms; but his warnings were unheeded, and he again sunk into private life, a victim to his integrity and unyielding patriotism.

#### HIS LAST VISIT TO THIS COUNTRY

Again, in his old age, Lafayette determined to look on the young Republic that had escaped the disasters which had overwhelmed France. When his plans were made known, our government offered to place a national vessel at his disposal; but he declined accepting it, and embarked at Havre in a merchantman, and arrived at New York, August 15, 1824. He was at this time sixty-seven years old.

His reception in this country, and triumphal march through it, is one of the most remarkable events in the history of the world. Such gratitude and unbounded affection were never before received by a man from a foreign nation. As he passed from Staten Island to New York, the bay was covered with gay barges decorated with streamers; and when the beautiful fleet shoved away, the bands struck up, "*Où peut-on être mieux, qu'au sein de sa famille?*" — "Where can one better be, than in the bosom of his family?" Never did this favorite French air

seem so appropriate—not even when the shattered Old Guard closed sternly around its Emperor, and sang it amid the fire of the enemy's guns—as when a free people thus chanted it around the venerable Lafayette. As he touched the shore, the thunder of cannon shook the city—old soldiers rushed weeping into his arms; and, “Welcome, Lafayette!” waved from every banner, rung from every trumpet, and was caught up by every voice, till “WELCOME, WELCOME!” rose and fell in deafening shouts from the assembled thousands. During the four days he remained in the city, it was one constant jubilee; and when he left for Boston, all along his route, the people rose to welcome him. He travelled every night till twelve o'clock, and watch-fires were kept burning on the hill-tops, along his line of progress. Blazing through the darkness, they outshone the torches that heralded him; while in the distance the pealing of bells from every church spire, announced his coming. The same enthusiastic joy received him at Boston; and when he returned to New York, the city was wilder than ever with excitement. In Castle-garden there was a splendid illumination in honor of him—the bridge leading to it was surmounted by a pyramid sixty feet high, with a blazing star at the top, from the centre of which flashed the name of Lafayette. The planks were covered with carpets, and trees and flowers innumerable lined the passage. Over the entrance was a triumphal arch of flowers—high columns arose from the area, supporting arches of flowers, and flags, and statues. As he entered this wilderness of beauty, the bands struck up, “See the

conquering hero comes," and shouts shook the edifice to its foundations. He had scarcely taken his seat in a splendid marquee, prepared for his reception, when the curtain before the gallery, in front of him, lifted—and there was a beautiful transparency, representing La Grange, with its grounds and towers, and beneath it, "*This is his home.*" Nothing could be more touching and affectionate than this device; and as Lafayette's eye fell upon it, a tear was seen to gather there, and his lip to quiver with feeling.

Thus the people received the "people's friend." From New York he went to Albany, and Troy, and one long shout of welcome rolled the length of the Hudson, as he floated up the noble stream. Returning, he went to Philadelphia; and passing through the same scenes that had been enacted in every city he had visited, continued his route to Mount Vernon, to visit the tomb of Washington. The thunder of cannon announced his arrival at the consecrated ground, calling to his mind the time when he had seen that, now lifeless chieftain, move through the tumult of battle. Wishing no one to witness his emotions, as he stood beside the ashes of his friend, he descended alone into the vault. With trembling steps, and uncovered head, he passed down to the tomb. The secrets of that meeting of the living with the dead, no one knows; but when the aged veteran came forth again, his face was covered with tears. He then took his son, and secretary by the hand, and led them into the vault. He could not speak—his bursting heart was too full for utterance, and he mutely pointed to the coffin of Washington. They



knelt reverently beside it, kissed it, then rising, threw themselves into Lafayette's arms, and burst into tears. It was a touching scene, there in the silent vault, and worthy the noble sleeper.

From thence he went to Yorktown, where a magnificent reception was given him. Proceeding South, he passed through all the principal cities, to New Orleans, and thence up the Mississippi, to Cincinnati, and across to Pittsburg, and finally to western New York, through which he hastened rapidly to Boston, to be present at the laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker's Hill monument.

Previously to his southern trip, however, he had visited Congress, and been received by that body with distinguished honor. A few days after, a bill was passed, giving him a hundred and forty thousand dollars, as payment, in part, for the money he had expended in our behalf. He had clothed and fed our naked, starving soldiers at his own cost—expended money for the State—fought our battles—endured, suffered, and toiled for our welfare; yet he never asked, never expected compensation. It had been entirely a free-will offering—his youth, his wealth, his life, all, an unselfish, noble sacrifice to a weak, but brave people, struggling to be free.

This generous, and yet only just remuneration, took Lafayette by surprise, and affected him deeply. Indeed, to a heart like his, the open arms and overflowing affection of the people were a sufficient reward. The entire nation had risen to do him homage. "Honor to Lafayette," "Welcome to Lafayette—the nation's guest," and such like exclamations,



had met him at every step. Flowers were strewed along his pathway—his carriage detached from the horses, and dragged by the enthusiastic crowd, along ranks of grateful freemen, who rent the heavens with their acclamations. From the heads of government down to the lowest menial, all had united in pouring blessings on his venerable head. Melted to tears by these demonstrations of love, he had moved like a father amid his children, scattering blessings wherever he went.

One of his last acts in this country, was to lay the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill monument. He had placed the stone over Baron De Kalb's grave, in South Carolina, and now it was fit that he, the last survivor of the major-generals of the American Revolution, should consecrate the first block in that grand structure. Amid the silent attention of fifty thousand spectators, this aged veteran, and friend of Washington, with uncovered head, performed the imposing ceremonies, and "Long live Lafayette," swelled up from the top of Bunker Hill.

At length, after having passed through almost the entire Union, in the space of a few months, he embarked the eighth of September, for his native land. The *Brandywine* was sent out by government to convey him home; and when it reached Havre, the officers, wishing to express their admiration of him, deputed their first lieutenant, Gregory, to convey their sentiments. The young officer, overcome by his feelings, was unable to utter a word; but in a spirit of true heroism, ran to the stern of the vessel, and snatching the flag that waved there, handed it

to him, saying: "We cannot confide it to more glorious keeping." He then made a short address, to which Lafayette replied, saying: "I hope, that displayed from the most prominent part of my house, at La Grange, it will always testify to all who may see it, the kindness of the American nation towards its adopted and devoted son."

The people thronged around him as he travelled through France, and he was everywhere hailed "The people's friend."

In public and private duties—in the service of his country, and in acts of private charity, he passed his life, until 1830, when Charles X.—mad, like all his race—issued his tyrannical ordinances, which produced the revolution that placed Louis Philippe on the throne. With the first intimation of the outbreak, he hastened to Paris, and at once took sides with the people. On the second day's fight, the students of the Polytechnic School assembled at his house to receive instructions in the course they should pursue. Lafayette was a man of a past generation, but his name had been a household word; and it was a touching spectacle to see those fresh and youthful students gather around the man of silver locks, and listen to the words of freedom that dropped from his lips, and then go forth to lay down their lives for their country. On the last day of that terrible struggle,—amid the pealing of the tocsin, the thunder of cannon, and groans of the dying, the name of Lafayette was the watch-word that rung over the tumult, and roused the courage of the patriots. Again the Bourbon throne went down in blood, and again

Lafayette put aside the power, which a successful revolution had placed in his hands. Louis Philippe was called to the throne, which the arm of Lafayette alone steadied till the revolution subsided.

It was not very long, however, before he and the king's cabinet disagreed. Louis Philippe had promised to protect the liberties of the people; but no sooner did he feel the sceptre in his hand, than the blood of a Bourbon began to tingle in his fingers. He had deceived Lafayette—but what could the latter do? The first revolution broke away from his restraining influence, and raged on till it was quenched in a sea of blood itself had set flowing. Bonaparte had deceived him, and grasped imperial power, and now Louis Philippe had proved false to his promises.

He lived but four years after this, and died of an affection of the kidneys, in 1834, in his seventy-seventh year. His death produced a great sensation in this country, and funeral honors were everywhere paid him.

#### HIS CHARACTER

Lafayette was about six feet in height, and in his later years somewhat corpulent. His face was oval, with light, large, and prominent eyes, a high forehead and aquiline nose.

He did not possess what is commonly termed genius, nor was he a man of remarkable intellectual powers. In youth, ardent and adventurous, he soon learned, under Washington, to curb his impulses, and act more from his judgment. Left to himself, he

probably never would have reached any great eminence—but there could have been no better school for the fiery young republican, than the family of Washington. His affection and reverence for the latter, gradually changed his entire character. Washington was his model, and imitating his self-control and noble patriotism, he became like him in patriotism and virtue. The difference between them was the same as that between an original and a copy. Washington was a man of immense strength of character—not only strong in virtue, but in intellect and will. Everything bent before him, and the entire nation took its impress from his mind. Lafayette was strong in integrity, and nothing could shake his unalterable devotion to the welfare of man. Enthusiastically wedded to republican institutions, no temptation could induce him to seize on, or aid power which threatened to overthrow them. Although somewhat vain and conceited, he was generous, self-sacrificing, and benevolent. Few men have passed through so many and so fearful scenes as he. From a young courtier, he passed into the self-denying, toilsome life of a general in the ill-clothed, ill-fed, and ill-disciplined American army—thence into the vortex of the French Revolution and all its horrors—thence into the gloomy prison of Olmutz. After a few years of retirement, he appeared on our shores to receive the welcome of a grateful people, and hear a nation shout his praise, and bear him from one limit of the land to another in its arms. A few years pass by, and with his gray hairs falling about his aged countenance, he stands

amid the students of Paris, and sends his feeble shout of defiance to the throne of the Bourbon, and it falls. Rising more by his virtue than his intellect, he holds a prominent place in the history of France, and linked with Washington, goes down to a greater immortality than awaits any emperor or mere warrior of the human race.

His love for this country was deep and abiding. To the last his heart turned hither, and well it might:—his career of glory began on our shores—on our cause he staked his reputation, fortune, and life, and in our success received the benediction of the good the world over. That love was returned with interest, and never was a nobler exhibition of a nation's gratitude than our reception of him at his last visit. We love him for what he did for us—we revere him for his consistency to our principles amid all the chaos and revolutions of Europe; and when we cease to speak of him with affection and gratitude, we shall show ourselves unworthy of the blessings we have received at his hand. "HONOR TO LAFAYETTE!" will ever stand inscribed on our temple of liberty until its ruins shall cover all it now contains.



LIFE OF  
BRIGADIER-GENERAL MARION

BY

J. T. HEADLEY





## BRIGADIER-GENERAL MARION

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His Early Life.—Heads a Forlorn Hope against the Cherokees.—Fires the last cannon in the Battle of Fort Moultrie.—Bravery at Savannah.—Breaks his leg by leaping from a window in Charleston.—Is hunted from cover to cover.—Left alone in the Field.—Joins Gates.—Appointed over a Brigade.—Its appearance, and that of Marion.—His first Expedition.—Fight at the Black Mingo.—Camp at Snow's Island.—Pursued by Tarleton.—By Watson, and defeats him.—His camp destroyed by Doyle.—Battle of King's Mountain.—Joined by Lee.—Takes Forts Watson and Motte.—Takes Georgetown.—Defeats Frazier.—Bravery at Eutaw.—Affair at Quimby Bridge.—Takes his seat in the Legislature.—Retires to his farm.—His marriage.—Noble conduct in the Senate.—His Character and Death.

MARION, SUMPTER, and LEE are names immortalized in the annals of Southern warfare. These did not rank as major-generals in the army, yet they commanded more or less separate portions of the country, and frequently carried on an independent warfare. They were partisan leaders; and as partisan war, especially in the South, constituted such an important feature in our Revolutionary struggle, I venture to depart from my original plan, and place MARION—the chief of them, in the group of major-generals. Though usually operating in small detachments, the combined action and influence of

those leaders were equal to that of a division of the army, and for a long time the fate of the Carolinas was in their keeping. A partisan warfare calls into action qualities different from those needed in a commander-in-chief. Celerity, boldness, and personal prowess are usually the characteristics of a partisan officer. Stratagems take the place of extensive combinations, and secret excursions that of an open campaign. Reckless daring is better than discipline; for the sudden onset is demanded oftener than the open field-fight. A good partisan leader may become an able commander of an army, though, to be the former, it is not necessary one should possess the qualities of the latter.

A predatory warfare was carried on to some extent by the Indians all along our north-western, and western frontiers, furnishing occasions to exhibit the hardihood and valor of our early settlers; but in the South it became a permanent thing, and assumed a settled character. The presence of a great army would swallow up for a while these independent companies; but at the withdrawal, or defeat of the former, the latter sprung again into existence, and hung like a cloud around the victorious enemy. No sooner did Lincoln surrender at Charleston, than from every swamp of the Carolinas started up bands of resolute men, ready to dispute with the invader the right to the soil. Out of the wreck of Gates's army arose, phoenix-like, a new form of opposition, which showed the thrice-conquered country unconquered still.

Marion's career embodies more of romance, per-

sonal adventure, hairbreadth escapes, wild daring, and heroic courage than usually falls to the lot of any man. During all that distressful period when our country was bleeding at every pore, his patriotism burned with a pure flame, and his hand was ever ready to strike. Whether we behold him in his solitary island encampment, amid the dark pine-trees, on whose branches his sentinels sit—eating his rude meal by the light of the blazing fire, or stealing with his chosen band of horsemen, by midnight, through the forest, to the unsuspecting enemy; or bursting, with his fierce war cry, on the British dragoons, or with sword waving above his head, leading his brave militia to the shock of the bayonet; he is the same cautious, daring, prompt, and resolute man. From the shades of the gloomy swamp—by the light of his lonely watch-fires—in the midst of battle—that same swarthy, calm, thoughtful face, looks steadily upon us, and that piercing black eye holds our earnest gaze. Through all the changes that came and went like shadows over the distracted South, the shout of “Marion’s men” rings cheerily out, and their rifle-shot is heard, sending hope and courage through thousands of brave, but desponding hearts.

FRANCIS MARION was born at Winyah, near Georgetown, South Carolina, in 1732—the same year which gave birth to Washington. His grandfather was one of the Huguenots of France, who fled to this country to escape persecution at home. Of diminutive proportions, and feeble frame, he seemed destined to an early grave, rather than to the long and arduous career he pursued with such honor to

himself, and good to his country. But at twelve years of age his health became firm, and that defiant, untamed spirit, which afterwards characterized him, began to exhibit itself. At sixteen he undertook a voyage to the West Indies, and was ship-wrecked. Six days in an open boat on the sea, without provisions, except a dead dog, and without water, seem to have cured him of his roving propensities; and he retired to the farm of his father.

He had but just arrived at maturity, when his father died—and after a short residence with his mother and brother Gabriel, he removed to Bell Isle, near Eutaw Springs, where he ever afterwards lived, and where his bones now rest. At the commencement of the French and Indian war, he enlisted as a private in a regiment of cavalry commanded by his brother. Afterwards he was appointed lieutenant under Moultrie, in an expedition against the Cherokees; and in an attack on them at Etchoee, led a forlorn hope of thirty-one men, only ten of whom escaped unwounded. The battle raged with sanguinary ferocity for six hours, when the savages gave way. After the peace, he returned to his farm, and between the labors of the field and the excitement of hunting, passed his life till the eventful year of 1775. The quarrel with the mother country then assuming a more alarming aspect, he entered warmly into the cause of the colonies, and was elected member of the provincial Congress of South Carolina. Casting his vote in favor of the act that bound the South and North together in a common brotherhood, he soon after received from that body the commission of cap-

tain in one of the three regiments raised for the defence of the colony. From this time till June of the next year, he was busy recruiting his regiment, disciplining his men, and performing the various duties of his station. His company composed a part of that gallant few, who so bravely defended Fort Moultrie for eleven hours against the combined attack of the British fleet. It is said the last gun fired on that day was directed by him. As the ships were retiring, he gave them a parting salute, and so well aimed was the piece, that the shot struck the cabin of the commander's ship, killing two young officers drinking at the table, then coursing onward, shattered in pieces three sailors in its passage, and, finally, bathed in the blood of its foes, "sunk with sullen joy to the bottom." This was but a presage of the destruction he was yet to carry through the ranks of the enemy—merely a messenger of deeds to be done.

After the battle, he continued for a while in command of the fort, but was engaged in no important action till the fatal attack on Savannah, by Count D'Estaing and General Lincoln. In the attempt to carry the town by storm, Marion was in the column led on by the gallant Laurens, and saw with the deepest indignation the terrible sacrifice of life that succeeded.

In the defence and fall of Charlestown, which followed, Marion took no part, and hence was saved to the country in a time when his services were most needed. The merest accident, however, prevented his sharing the fate of Lincoln and his army. Soon

after the siege commenced, he was invited, with a party of friends, to dine at the house of a gentleman in the city. After dinner, the host good-naturedly turned the key of the door on his guests, declaring that none should depart till they were all well filled with wine. Marion was a man of temperate, abstemious habits, and not wishing to offend his host by raising a disturbance with his half-tipsy companions, coolly threw up a window and leaped out. They were dining in the second story, and Marion came to the ground with such force, that he broke his ankle. This rendered him unfit for service, and he was carried on a litter out of the place, so as not to add to the burdens of the besieged.

After the fall of Charleston and defeat of Beaufort, the whole surrounding country was in possession of the enemy, and Marion's position became exceedingly critical. Hunted from cover to cover, and too crippled to help himself, he was entirely dependent on his friends for safety. Sometimes in the thicket, and sometimes in the field, he lurked from one place of concealment to another, until he was at length able to ride on horseback; when, gathering around him a few friends, he started for North Carolina, to join Baron de Kalb on his way thither from Virginia. Poor and penniless, without any prospect of pay, and impelled only by a devoted love to his country, he pursued his weary way northward. Horry, his companion and friend, in speaking of their poverty, says, "except for carrying a knife, or a horse-fleam, or a gun-flint, we had no more use for a pocket than a Highlander has for a knee-



buckle. As to hard money, we had not seen a dollar for years."

In the meantime, Gates had superseded De Kalb, and commenced that series of blunders which ended in his overthrow, and the destruction of the army. Marion joined him with but twenty men, all told, and a most sorry company they were. Mounted on such horses as they could get, clad in tattered garments, with small leather caps on their heads, and equipped with rusty firelocks, powder-horns, and scarce a bayonet among them, they moved the mirth of the regular soldiers, and the contempt of Gates. But this brave partisan was worth a hundred of such men as Gates, and had the latter consulted him, his fate might have been different. From Marion's side the militia were never known to fly, as they did from their leaders in the disastrous battle of Camden. But he was spared the pain of witnessing the errors that preceded and brought on the action, and perhaps the death he would doubtless have sought beside the brave De Kalb. For while in camp, he received a message from the Whigs of Williamsburg, to become their leader, and immediately departed to take command. Gates, sure of victory, ordered him to destroy all the scows and boats on the way, so as to prevent the doomed Cornwallis from escaping. The brigade over which he found himself, was composed of undisciplined, but brave and hardy men, accustomed to the use of firearms, and fatal marksmen. Its after history was one of patient toil, privations, perilous adventures, and heroic deeds, unsurpassed in the annals of partisan warfare.

At this time, Marion received his commission as brigadier, from Governor Rutledge; though from his dress one would never have supposed him to be a general. He was now forty-eight years of age, small, lean, and swarthy, but firmly set, and of iron sinews. He wore a scarlet-colored outer jacket, of coarse cloth, and a leather cap with a silver crescent in front, on which was inscribed "Liberty or Death." His new troops were no better equipped than himself; but their wants were few, and if they could but get arms and ammunition, the regimentals could be dispensed with. In order to supply themselves with swords, they took the saws from the neighboring saw-mills, and hammered them into stout blades; which, though not of Damascus temper and polish, would, in the brawny hands that wielded them, cleave a man to the spine at a blow. Without tents or baggage, with but few blankets—their intrepid leader having but one to serve both for his bed and covering—they mounted their fleet horses and entered on their adventurous career. They were bold riders, and could fire as well from the saddle as from the ground; and proud and careful of their steeds, often starved their own stomachs to feed them. Marion, soon after he set out, obtained a splendid horse, from a Tory, named Ball, which would outstrip the wind in speed, and could swim like a dog. Many a dark night, when the horses of his column would refuse to enter a deep river, the farther shore of which could not be seen, has Ball boldly plunged into the stream with his fearless master, and drawn the whole troop after him.

Thus equipped and thus commanded, this mounted brigade started off on its first expedition. At the outset, Marion showed his men what kind of service he expected of them. Ordering them to ride all night, he came up in the morning with a large party of Tories encamped at Butler's Neck, and fell on them with such suddenness and fury, that the whole party was scattered as if a whirlwind had swept through it.

Many of those who composed Marion's troops, were men of amazing physical strength—daring riders, and desperate fighters. In this first encounter, one of them, named James,\* made at Major Gainey, who commanded the Tories, and chased him for a half a mile along the road. Leaning over his saddle, with his drawn sword in his hand, he swept onward in such a headlong gallop, that he soon left all his companions far behind. With his flashing eye fixed on his antagonist, on whom he was gaining at every spring, he did not see that he was dashing, all alone, into a large body of Tories, who had rallied in their flight. Not a moment was to be lost—to retreat was impossible—and without tightening the rein, he waved his sword over his head, and shouting, as if a whole troop were at his back: "*Come on, boys; here they are!*" burst like a thunderbolt into their very midst. The whole party broke without firing a shot, and fled to the swamps.

Halting only long enough to rest his men and horses, Marion went in search of another detach-

\* There were five brothers of this name, all in Marion's brigade; and noble men they were.

ment of Tories. On coming up he found them too strongly posted to be attacked in their position, and so beguiled them into an ambush; when he fell on them so unexpectedly, that he dispersed them without losing a man. He then marched for the Upper Santee, and on his route heard of the defeat of Gates, at Camden. Concealing the news from his men, lest they should be discouraged, he pushed on to intercept a party, which his scouts informed him was coming down the river with a large number of prisoners, taken at Camden, in their charge. Marching rapidly forward, he got possession of a defile, through which they were to pass, and at daylight attacked them, both in front and rear, with such suddenness that they gave but one volley, and fled. Twenty-four British soldiers, and a hundred and fifty continentals of the Maryland line, were the fruits of this victory.

Marion now found himself alone in the field—the Southern army was annihilated, and he was left single-handed to resist the overwhelming force of the enemy. But his brave followers, instead of being discouraged, as he feared they would be, rose in daring and determination as the danger thickened—clinging faithfully to their leader. This bold band, on their fleet horses, darted from point to point—now breaking up a recruiting party—now dispersing and disheartening the loyalists, and again cutting off supplies of the British army, or falling on their outposts, and beating up their quarters, till at length Cornwallis was irritated beyond all endurance. He had cut up our army, and if left alone for only a

short time, could fill the country with such an array of Tories, that the Whig militia would be overawed and subdued. But this policy could not be carried out, so long as this wily partisan was scouring the country with his riders. The Tories themselves were afraid to gather together; for they could scarcely organize before the crack of his rifles sent them frightened to their homes, and roused the courage of the Whigs.

At length Cornwallis wrote to Tarleton, to get hold of "Mr. Marion," at all hazards; and soon this daring relentless officer was after him with his dreaded legion. With only a hundred and fifty men Marion was unable to compete with this force; but still hoping for some favorable opportunity to strike, he sent out Major James—the same who had charged, all alone, so valiantly, a large band of Tories, while he was chasing down Gainey—to reconnoitre. With a few picked men he set forth on his perilous mission, which he contrived, before he got through with it, to make still more dangerous. Concealing his little party in a thicket, at sunset, by the road along which he knew the enemy to be marching, he waited their approach. Soon after dark he heard the tread of the advancing column; and notwithstanding his dangerous proximity, determined to stay and count the troops as they passed. By the light of the moon, in whose rays the long line of bayonets sparkled, he could distinguish everything. With laughter and mirth the shining procession passed on; but at sight of the Tories who followed, the bold partisan's wrath was so kindled, that

he resolved to leave his mark on them before he left. In the rear of the cavalcade were several stragglers, and these James selected as the objects of his fury. At a given signal the spurs sunk into the flanks of their steeds, and those fierce horsemen cleared the thicket with a single bound, and emerged into the moonlight. With their sabres gleaming about them, and a terrible shout, they fell on the panic-stricken wretches—the next moment, each with his prisoner behind him, was sweeping in a tearing gallop along the road, the echo of their horses' feet rapidly dying away in the distance. Before daybreak he was with Marion. The news of the enemy's force was even worse than the latter had feared; and the officers retired to consult, while the men sat on their horses to wait the issue. There was no alternative—they must take refuge in flight; and the gallant band obeyed though they received the announcement with groans. The next evening, at sunset, with only sixty men, he commenced his march for North Carolina. The merciless invaders had it now their own way, and swept through the country with fire and sword. The ashes of houses and churches burned to the ground, lands laid waste, and murdered men, were the monuments they left along the track of their desolating march:—but a score of wrongs and cruelties was run up, yet to be wiped out with their own blood.

The immediate effect of these barbarities was to arouse the militia to resistance. Marion, who had travelled night and day till he reached North Carolina, soon learned from his scouts of the rallying of



the country, and joyfully hastened back to the scene of danger. The rapidity of his march shows the amazing celerity of his movements, and the wonderful endurance possessed by his men. He travelled night and day, and the second day marched *sixty miles*. Being joined on his way by reinforcements, he immediately planned a night attack on a large party of Tories encamped on the Black Mingo. Though they outnumbered him two to one, his men were fierce for the fight, and he determined to gratify them. The ferry across the river was commanded so completely by the enemy, that it would be impossible to force it, while the only other route to their camp, was through a swamp and over a plank bridge about a mile farther up. The latter, Marion resolved to take, and pressing on through the darkness, he with his men reached the bridge about midnight, and immediately began to cross it in close and firm order, hoping to take the enemy by surprise. But the clatter of the horses' feet on the loose planks was heard by the sentinel, and an alarm-gun fired in the distance. Concealment was now over, and spurring to the head of his column, Marion ordered his men to follow on a gallop; and away they dashed, making the bridge rattle and creak under their feet. When he came within about three hundred yards of the Tories, he ordered his militia-men to dismount and fasten their horses. He then planned his attack; and falling on them both in front and rear at the same time, after a short but bloody conflict, laid half of their number prostrate on the field, and drove the remainder into the swamps; but his own brigade



also suffered severely. His loss was often greater, from the fact, that he much of the time had no surgeon in his band, and hence the wounded would frequently bleed to death. The alarm given also, while he was yet a mile off, had allowed the enemy time to rally, and choose their own field of battle. But Marion learned a lesson by this, which he never forgot; and ever after, when a bridge was to be crossed he covered it with the blankets of his men, so as to deaden the sound.

Those night marches and night battles added inconceivably to the mystery and romance of his character. They remind us of olden stories of outlaws and robber bands, and present a series of pictures worthy the pencil of Salvator Rosa. The marshalling of those uncouth-looking, coarse-clad men, at sunset—the winding of the silent column through the gloomy swamp, where even the moonlight seemed darkened—the array of stern-knit brows which pressed close after that solemn, swarthy face, when danger was near—the watch-fires of the unsuspecting enemy in the distance—the sudden blast of bugles—the clatter of galloping steeds, and the shouts of fierce riders as they burst in one wild torrent on the foe, combine to throw an air of mystery and poetry around Marion that make us fascinated with his character. Slightly made, reserved—almost solemn—given to no excess, very abstemious in all his habits—kind and gentle even to his foes, but stern as death when aroused—seeking no emolument, and receiving no reward, sustained alone by a lofty patriotism, he is just the man around which to

weave romances, and gather all that is picturesque and thrilling in human life. Thus a short time after the affair at Black Mingo, he came again at midnight upon a party of Tories wrapped in sleep, and rode over them ere they could rise from their repose.

He was soon after pressed closely by Tarleton, with a superior force, and came near falling into his hands, through the treachery of one of his recruits—but escaping by a sudden flight, he led his enraged adversary through swamps and morasses twenty-five miles, till the latter gave over, saying, “Come, my boys, let us go back. We will soon find the *game cock*, (meaning Sumpter,) but as for this d——d *swamp fox*, the devil himself could not catch him.”

Every adventure of this character added to the influence and strength of Marion.

#### HIS CAMP AT SNOW’S ISLAND

His camp at Snow’s Island, whither he now retired after an unsuccessful attempt on Georgetown, was calculated to increase it still more. This island is situated in the Pedee, where Lynch’s Creek empties into it, and at the time he selected it as a place of retreat, was covered in the more elevated parts with tall pine trees, and in the lower portions with dense cane-brakes. All the boats in the region, except those moored to his island castle, he ordered to be destroyed, and here amid the wildness and beauty of nature, this bold partisan pitched his camp, and ruled like an ancient feudal lord. He strength-

ened the natural defences around him, while the few avenues that led to his retreat were guarded by trusty rifles. A more picturesque scene cannot be imagined than this camp presented on a bright warm day. There, in the tall cool forest, those hardy warriors, in their uncouth garments, lay stretched on the ground, preparing their repast of potatoes, while the smoke of the fires curling slowly up through the tree-tops, struggled almost in vain to reach the open space of heaven. On every side, half-hid by the trunks and foliage, horses were browsing with their saddles on and the bits dangling about their necks, ready at a moment's warning to be mounted; and from the branches of the trees swords hung idly suspended. Here and there, through the trees, blue wreaths of smoke were seen rising where the outposts were engaged at their frugal meal, while down that dark and silent avenue, which led to the shore, the rifles of sentinels gleamed amid the shrubbery.

But as one gazes into that camp, the object of deepest interest there is a single sleeper. His slight form is thrown upon the ground, and though the piercing black eye is veiled, that calm swarthy face reveals the partisan leader. He sleeps soundly, securely, and well he may, amid that circle of iron-hearted men; for at his slightest cry a hundred swords would leap from their scabbards; and bold must be the foeman who then and there would dare press upon him. He sleeps well; but a slight touch has awakened him, and he rises to hear the message brought by one of his scouts. A band of Tories is near, lying waste the country. In a moment that

quiet camp is alive with the bustle of preparation; and lo! that column of horsemen is winding its way to the river.

Before morning their war-shout will be heard, and the strokes of their sabres felt by the spoilers of the land.

It was here he received the visit of the English officer, and dined him on roasted potatoes. Marion's fare was always simple in the extreme—vinegar and water mixed composing his only drink. "His favorite time for moving was with the setting sun, and then it was known the march would continue all night. Before striking any sudden blow, he has been known to march sixty or seventy miles, taking no other food in twenty-four hours than a meal of cold potatoes and a draught of cold water. His scouts were out in all directions, and at all hours. They were taught a peculiar and shrill whistle, which at night could be heard at a most astonishing distance. They did the double duty of patrols and spies. They hovered about the posts of the enemy, crouching in the thickets or darting along the plain, picking up prisoners, and information, and spoils together. Sometimes the single scout, buried in the thick top of a tree, looked down upon the march of his legions, or hung perched over the encampment till it slept, then slipped down, stole through the silent host, carrying off a drowsy sentinel or a favorite charger, upon which the daring spy flourished conspicuous among his less fortunate companions."\* Among this hardy band, none had greater powers of endur-

\* *Vide* Simms, pages 162, 167, 171.

ance than Marion. In summer and winter he had but one blanket to protect him from cold and storms, and this, after a while, he lost. Lying one night upon some straw, it took fire while he was asleep, and the blanket nearly consumed—he himself narrowly escaping a severe scorching. It mattered not to him, however—with his hominy or potatoes, his vinegar and water, he would ride sixty miles on a stretch, and then fight a battle before resting. He never informed his men of the length of his proposed expeditions, and the only way they could ascertain it, was to see how much hominy or corn meal his servant put up. He frequently went into action with only three rounds of ammunition to each man; and sometimes without any or even arms to a portion of the company. In such cases the men would coolly stand and watch the fight, till their companions shot down some of the enemy, when they would rush up and take possession of their muskets and cartridges. Saw-mill saws furnished broad-swords, but there was a dreadful scarcity of bullets. If the militia could obtain buckshot, they were satisfied; but they were often compelled to fight with nothing but *swan-shot*, which, though peppering a great many, killed but few in proportion.

Such was Marion and such were his men and equipments when he pitched his camp on Snow's Island. But here reinforcements began to come in; and he soon found himself a brigadier in strength, as well as in name.

About this time, however, he met with two heavy losses, one of which wrung his heart, and the other

weakened his power. His nephew, Gabriel Marion, whom he loved with the affection of a father, a young officer of great bravery and promise, was taken prisoner by the Tories, and cruelly massacred. The blow fell heavy upon him, and many a deep and terrible oath was sworn by his band, to avenge his death. The supposed murderer was afterwards taken, and slain, before Marion could interpose to his rescue. The other calamity was the loss of Sumpter's services. This gallant chief had met Tarleton, and utterly routed him at Blackstock. Pushing on with four hundred mounted men, the British leader fell furiously on him, but was repulsed, with the loss of nearly two hundred men. Sumpter had only three killed, and three wounded out of his whole command; but among the latter was himself. A bullet struck his breast, inflicting a terrible wound. His devoted followers immediately wrapped him in the raw hide of a bullock, and slinging him between two horses, sent him, guarded by a hundred resolute men, into North Carolina. It was a long time before he could again take the field.

But if disasters thickened in one quarter, hope brightened in another. In October of this year, 1780, occurred the—

#### BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN

Colonel Ferguson had been detached by Cornwallis, to the frontiers of North Carolina, to encourage and arm the loyalists, and intimidate the patriots. He swept the country with fire and sword, and drove

the defenceless mothers and children, with ribald shouts, from their blazing homes. Women were ravished, and every enormity human depravity could suggest practiced. These outrages at length aroused the mountaineers to the highest pitch of desperation. Rallying in haste, they appointed their own officers, and demanded immediately to be led against the bloody monster. Mounted each on his horse, with only a wallet and a blanket, they set forward. At night they slept on the damp earth, and in the morning again pressed resolutely on. At every step they came upon the marks of the ravages of the enemy, which whetted into keener vengeance their already excited passions. Ferguson, hearing of the storm that was gathering around him, retired to a hill covered with trees, and shaped somewhat like a flattened cone, and there planted his men, and awaited the onset. At length the enraged patriots found him, and with cries of vengeance, swarmed in a crowd at the base of the hill. Colonels Cleveland, Campbell, Selby, Sevier, Williams, and others led them on. The first, addressing his men, said: "My brave fellows, we have beat the Tories, and can do it again. When you are engaged, you are not to wait the word of command from me: I will show you, by my example, how to fight. I can undertake no more. Every man must consider himself an officer, and act from his own judgment. Fire as quick as you can, and stand your ground as long as you can. When you can do no better, get behind trees, and retreat; but I beg of you not to run quite off. If we are repulsed, let us return to the fight; perhaps we will have better luck



the second time. If any of you are afraid, such have leave to retire, and I beg they will immediately take themselves off." \* They shouted to be led forward; and driving the advanced guard of the British before them, streamed up the heights, and surrounding the enemy, began to pour in their rapid fire. Ferguson ordered his men to charge bayonet; and moving intrepidly on the column of Cleveland, drove it back. But while pressing up his advantage, Selby began to ascend the farther side, compelling him to turn back and defend himself, which he did like a tiger at bay, and the Americans again recoiled. But Cleveland's men, following the advice which had been given them, rallied anew, and rushed, with loud shouts, to the charge. Campbell also had now come up, and the battle raged like a storm, there on the crest of the hill. Ferguson found himself completely hemmed in, yet continued to fight like a desperado. He knew there was no hope for him, if once caught by those outraged Americans, and he strained every nerve to clear himself from the circle of fire that was every moment contracting closer and closer. Charge after charge of bayonet was made, but those determined men recoiled only to spring with more desperate energy to the encounter. They called on Ferguson to surrender, but he sternly refused; and rallying his diminished troops around him, bravely fell, with his sword waving over him. His troops then called for quarter, and the battle ceased. The British lost in all, eleven hundred killed, wounded, and prisoners; together with their arms and munitions of war. The

\* *Vide* Memoirs of Moultrie.

excited patriots spared the English soldiers, but many of the Tories were strung up to the trees, before order could be restored.

This was a severe blow to Cornwallis, and filled the Tories with terror.

The prospect around Marion was relieved now and then by such bright spots, and the cause of liberty strengthened. At length when Greene took command of the Southern army, the sky began slowly to brighten. He did not, like Gates, despise such men as Marion, Sumpter, and others, but leaned heavily upon them, and, as the sequel proved, not in vain. He wrote immediately to Marion, encouraging and strengthening him.

About this time occurred one of those incidents so frequent during the Revolution, and which illustrate the character of our people. Washington, with his cavalry, came upon the British Colonel Rugely, posted in a strong redoubt—and knowing that it would be vain to attack him simply with horsemen, ordered a pine log to be hewn into the shape of a cannon and mounted on a pair of wagon-wheels. With this he slowly and solemnly approached the redoubt, and summoned the English commander to surrender. Seeing such a formidable piece of artillery approach, the latter concluded it would be useless to attempt a defence, and yielded the post. Cornwallis, speaking of it in a letter to Tarleton, very significantly remarks, “*Rugely will not be made a brigadier.*”

Soon after Lee joined Marion, and the two together made an attack on Georgetown, which was

only partially successful. But when Greene commenced his famous retreat, Lee was called to his aid, and Marion again left alone. He, however, did not relax his efforts, but with his little band, and sustained by such trusty men as Horry, Macdonald, James, and others, kept the Tories and British detachments in constant alarm.

A British officer, Major McElrath, was sent out to destroy his band; but Marion attacked him with such vigor that he forced him to retreat. The latter being without cavalry, was compelled finally to take a strong position and offer battle. But the wily partisan knew too well where his strength lay to accept it, and coolly encamped near him, waiting until he should move again. While the two forces were occupying this position, the British officer sent Marion a challenge to single combat. The latter replied, that if he wished to see a fight between twenty picked men, he had no objection. The proposition was accepted, and all the arrangements made for this strange encounter, which seemed to transport one back to knightly days. Marion picked out his own men; and, when everything was ready, addressed them in his usually pithy style: "My brave soldiers," said he, "you are twenty men picked out of my whole brigade. I know you all, and have often witnessed your bravery. In the name of your country I call upon you to show it. My confidence in you is great: I am sure it will not be disappointed. Fight like men as you always have done, and you are sure of the victory." This was a long speech for him, and it was received with loud shouts by those resolute

men. They had no bullets, and so rammed home good heavy charges of buck-shot, and marched out towards where the British stood drawn up in order. Vanderhorst, who commanded this gallant little band, turned to Witherspoon, the second officer, and asked "what distance he would prefer, as the most sure, to strike with buck-shot?" "Fifty yards for the first fire," he replied. "Then," said Vanderhorst, turning to the men, "when we get within fifty yards, as I am not a good judge of distance, Mr. Witherspoon will tap me on the shoulder; I will then give the word, my lads, and you will then form on my left opposite to these fellows. As you form, each man will fire at the one directly opposite, and my word for it few will need a second shot." \* They advanced boldly, till within about a hundred yards of the British, when the latter, at the order of their officer, retreated. The Americans then halted, gave three cheers, and marched laughing back to their companions.

That night McElrath broke up his camp, and leaving his heavy baggage behind, commenced a precipitate retreat. In the morning, Marion followed him—though he finally, out of respect to an enemy who had shown a forbearance towards the people not practiced by any other British officer, called off his troop.

Colonel Watson was next despatched, with a strong force, to destroy our unconquerable partisan. The latter boldly advanced to meet him, and coming up with his guard at Wiboo Swamp, immediately

\* *Vide* Simms' "Life of Marion."

commenced the attack. Horry, who commanded his cavalry, was thrown back in disorder, which Marion no sooner discovered, than he cried out "*charge*," with such a vehement expression, that the whole body threw itself forward with resistless impetuosity, and swept the road. Watson's regulars, however, restored the fight, and finally forced Marion to retreat. The Tory horse following up the advantage, were pressing with dangerous energy upon him as he was crossing a narrow causeway, when Gavin James, a man of huge proportions and boiling courage, and mounted on a powerful gray horse, wheeled right in front of the whole advancing column. He was armed with a musket, and as he turned, took deliberate aim, and shot the first man dead. A whole volley blazed in his face, sending the bullets in a shower around his head, not one of which however struck him. A dragoon rushing forward, he transfixed him with the bayonet—a second coming to the rescue, fell beside his companion. Awestruck at this bold horseman, as he thus sat on his steed in the road and hurled death around him, the whole column halted. In a moment Marion's cavalry was upon it, breaking it in pieces, and sending the fugitives in affright back to their infantry.

He then slowly retired, fighting as he went, till at length he threw himself across the Pedee, and destroying the bridge, awaited his enemy. As Watson approached the bank, the deadly riflemen picked off his men with fearful rapidity; and when he ordered the cannon to be advanced, so as to clear the low grounds on the farther side, the artillerists fell dead

beside their guns. Finding this would not do, he attempted to force the ford, and a detachment was sent forward. The officer commanding it advanced gallantly; but as he approached the water, waving his sword and cheering on his troops, the crack of a single rifle was heard, and he fell dead in his footsteps. A whole volley followed, which sent the thinned ranks in affright to their cover. Four brave fellows undertook to bear off their dead commander, but they all fell beside the corpse. Watson was terrified, declaring he had never seen such shooting in his life,—and, afraid to force the passage of the river, resorted to skirmishing across it.

The next day he sent a flag to Marion, complaining bitterly of his barbarous practice of shooting down his pickets, affirming it was fit only for “robbers,” and challenging him to come out and fight like a man and a Christian. Marion did not even deign a reply to this message, and coolly told his men to keep shooting both sentinels and pickets. But the flag did not go back unanswered—a Sergeant McDonald, a bold Scotchman, who had lost all his clothes in one of the late skirmishes, sent word to Watson, that he was very much in want of them, and if he did not give them up, he would kill eight of his men as pay. The English officer was thrown into a transport of rage at this insolent message; but his fellow-officers, who knew McDonald well, told him that the bold dragoon would certainly fulfil his threat. Watson, who had been filled with terror at the sharp-shooting of our men, and thinking, perhaps, that he might be the first victim of McDon-

ald's vengeance, actually sent back his clothes. But the most amusing part of the whole affair, was the gratitude and politeness of McDonald. He immediately returned word to Watson, that he would not now fulfil his threat, and instead of killing eight of his men, would *kill but four*. Whether the former was particularly thankful for this reduction of fifty per cent. or not, is not recorded, but it was certainly the coolest piece of impudence one could well perform. To make it still worse, this fearless dragoon, two days after, shot an English lieutenant through the knee, at the distance of three hundred yards.

At length Watson, finding he could not force the river, and seeing also that he had far the worst of it in skirmishing, broke up his camp and retired precipitately towards Georgetown; but Marion's men seemed everywhere present, and the crack of their rifles rung from every thicket. Surrounded, and kept in constant trepidation, the English colonel hurried on till he reached Ox Swamp. Here he made a halt, for only one narrow causeway crossed the morass, and on that stood Marion's men, protected by trees, which they had felled across the road. Recoiling from the encounter, Watson wheeled into the open pine-woods, and struck across the country for the Santee road, fifteen miles distant. He had not gone far, however, before Marion was upon him, and when the latter came up, he found the British infantry on the full trot in their precipitate flight. Falling on their flank and rear, he mowed them down, and but for the failure of a single officer, whom Horry had placed over an ambush party, the



whole corps would have been captured. It made out to reach Georgetown, though thinned and wasted severely by Marion's rifles and heavy sabres.

At the same time that Watson set out with his expedition, a Colonel Doyle, with another regiment, marched on Snow's Island, and wasted that romantic encampment of the partisan leader, capturing all his baggage and stores. This was a heavy blow; and Marion, for the first time, gave way to despondency. Greene was fleeing northward, before the victorious Cornwallis, and South Carolina lay open to the ravages of the Tories and British, who now were able to concentrate all their forces on him and his brigade. This hardy and patriotic chief was not fighting for victory, but simply to do what he could towards keeping alive the spirit of the Whigs; and it is a matter of astonishment, that he was able to retain his irregular troops about him, under such disheartening circumstances. The storm began to gather darker, and more threateningly over his head, and his stern soul at last sunk under the accumulated dangers that momentarily increased. In this crisis of his affairs, he did not know which way to turn; and one day as he was walking alone, absorbed in thought, and weighed down with discouragement, Horry approached him, and said: "General, our men are few; and if what I hear be true, you never wanted them more." Marion started, as if from a dream, and fixing on Horry an anxious look, exclaimed: "Go immediately to the field-officers, and learn from them, if, in the event of my being driven to the mountains, they will follow my fortunes, and

with me carry on the war until the enemy is driven out of the country. *Go and bring me their answer without delay.*" Away went Horry, while the anxious chief returned to his solitary walk, and his gloomy meditations. The former had not been gone long before he returned with the joyful intelligence, that they, one and all, would stand by him till death. At the news Marion's black eye flashed with delight, and rising on his toes, he exclaimed: "*I am satisfied—one of these parties shall soon feel us.*" Noble man—he wanted only to know that his brave troops would bear all that he would bear, to be himself again.

Immediately after this, he turned on Doyle, who had just laid waste his beautiful encampment on Snow's Island; but in crossing Lynch's Creek and swamp, which were overflowing with water, from a recent freshet, his men, many of them lost their muskets, and with difficulty floundered through in the darkness. Nothing daunted, however, he pressed on, and soon came upon traces of the flying enemy. Destroying all his heavy baggage, and strewing the road with the wreck, Doyle fled towards Camden, impelled by the fear of Marion, and anxiety for the fate of Rawdon, on whom Greene, fresh from the battle of Guilford, was now rapidly marching. Finding him beyond his reach, Marion wheeled about, and set out in search of his old enemy, Watson, who was again in the field, and hanging darkly on his flanks. The latter immediately fled rapidly towards Camden, and Marion, with Lee, who had just joined him, left the pursuit, and marched against Fort Wat-

son, and invested it. But neither besiegers nor besieged had a single cannon, while the strong fortifications rendered a storm extremely hazardous. In this dilemma Marion's genius, which had helped him out of worse difficulties, came to his aid. He ordered trees to be cut down, and the logs carried on men's shoulders, close to the fort. After dark, these were piled crosswise, one upon another, thus forming a huge cobhouse, high enough to overlook the garrison, into which the riflemen crawled, and waited for daylight to appear. Hardly had the gray dawn streaked the east, before the British were aroused by a shower of rifle-bullets in their midst. Finding their works thus unexpectedly commanded—and assailed in the meantime, by a storming party, the garrison surrendered.

Greene's bold and sudden movement on Cornwallis's line of Southern posts, had encouraged the Whigs, and the hardy mountaineers now came pouring in to Marion, and he soon found a respectable brigade again under his command. Lee and Eaton having joined him, he invested, by Greene's direction, Fort Motte, the principal depot of provision for the British army, between Camden and Charleston. A fine large house, belonging to Mrs. Motte, situated on a high hill, had been turned into a fort, and surrounded with a deep trench, and high parapets. The lady herself had been driven forth, and at this time, occupied an old farm-house near by, where Marion also took up his headquarters. The Americans had only one six-pounder, with which to batter down these fortifications; but having completed the invest-

ment, and planted their single gun, the garrison was summoned to surrender. A refusal being returned, the siege went gradually on. But before the place could be reduced, news arrived of the rapid approach of Rawdon, to the rescue. He had destroyed his baggage—set Camden on fire, and was now advancing by forced marches; while Greene, anxious for Marion, was also straining every nerve to reach him first. He wrote to him to press the siege with the utmost despatch; but Rawdon's fires were already blazing on the farther side of the river, and another day would place him in the fort. The garrison were overjoyed at the prospect of their deliverance; but Marion was filled with the deepest perplexity, respecting the next measure to be adopted. There seemed no alternative but to set fire to the fine mansion of Mrs. Motte, within the fort—if this could be done, the place must surrender. Marion felt great reluctance in proposing it to the lady, who had treated him and his officers with so much kindness and generosity, during the eight days they had consumed in the siege; yet there was no other course left open to him, and he at length hesitatingly told her so. But Mrs. Motte was one of those noble South Carolina matrons, whose virtues shed lustre on themselves, and glory on our cause, and not only consented, but seemed delighted with the prospect of rendering her country a service. Hastening to a private apartment, she brought forth a bow and some arrows, which had been sent from India, as objects of curiosity. To those arrows combustible materials were attached and set on fire, and thus launched against the roof,

which rose above the parapets of the fort. A strong militia-man shot the missiles, which lighting on the dry shingles, soon kindled them into a blaze. The English commander immediately ordered a company of soldiers on the roof, to extinguish the fire; but Marion had trained his six-pounder upon it with such precision, that they were forced to retire, and the house was soon wrapped in flames. This made the quarters too hot for the garrison, and they surrendered.

That same night Greene entered the camp of Marion, and shook the hand of the worthy partisan with delight. There had been a slight quarrel between them, which well-nigh completely estranged the latter. The former had sent to him for some horses to replenish his cavalry, which he refused to furnish. Greene hearing that his refusal grew out of unwillingness to dismount his militia, wrote him a reproachful letter, which wounded his feelings so deeply, that he resolved to resign his commission. The noble-hearted Greene, both grieved and alarmed at the serious light in which Marion viewed his complaint, wrote him immediately a long explanation which healed the breach before it became widened, and thus secured an ally who had ever been faithful, and whose aid at this critical moment was of vital importance.

After the fall of Fort Motte, Lee again left Marion, and the latter, with Sumpter, was appointed to hold Rawdon in check, while Greene could advance on Ninety-Six. They succeeded in driving him behind his intrenchments in and near Georgetown, and

then began that daring game so common with our partisan troops. Marion at length took Georgetown, but not being able to garrison it, removed all the stores, provisions, &c., and abandoned it.

In the meantime, Rawdon, having received large reinforcements, became too strong for Marion, and started off to relieve Ninety-Six, as mentioned in the sketch of Greene.

After the return of the former to Orangeburg, Marion was despatched with Sumpter and Lee, and others, to the South, and succeeded in driving the enemy within the gates of Charleston.

#### AFFAIR AT QUIMBY'S BRIDGE

Sumpter and Marion then advanced to Monk's Corner, where Colonel Coates was posted with six hundred and fifty men. Watboo and Quimby Creeks lay between him and Charleston, and the destruction of the bridges over them would effectually cut off his retreat to the latter place. Failing to destroy that of Watboo in time, Sumpter, Lee, and Marion pressed on after the retreating column, hoping to overtake it before it reached Quimby Creek. On going a little distance, they discovered that the cavalry and infantry had separated, and taken different routes. Hampton, therefore, pressed on after the former, while Lee's and Marion's cavalry gave chase to the latter, and came up with the rear-guard about a mile from Quimby Creek. "Front rank, bayonets! second rank, fire!" fell in startling distinctness on the squadron, but the next moment the fierce horsemen



were riding through the broken lines, and without a musket being discharged, the whole rear-guard surrendered.

But Coates, with the main body, was already over the bridge, and drawn up on the farther side, waiting for the baggage to pass before he threw the planks into the water. They had all been loosened, and needed but a slight touch to cast them off, while a howitzer, at the opposite extremity, commanded the passage.

This was the position of things, when the American cavalry was seen sweeping along the narrow causeway leading to the creek. The rear-guard having surrendered, without firing a shot, Coates was ignorant of the disaster that had befallen him, and hence was not fully prepared for this sudden onset. He, however, ordered the men to throw off the planks, and his troops to form in order of battle. Captain Armstrong, who led the first section of the pursuing cavalry, halted, as he saw the preparations made to receive him, and sent back word to Lee to know what should be done. In the hurry of the moment he forgot to state the new position of things, and hence received in reply the order, "*to fall on the enemy at all hazards.*" A terrible expression gathered on Armstrong's brow when he heard it, and he leaned fiercely over his saddle-bow for a second—the next instant his powerful horse sprung, with a terrible snort, into the air, as the spurs sunk deep in his sides, and "*Legion cavalry, CHARGE!*" rang back in a voice of thunder, and away went those bold riders like a rattling storm. The bridge creaked and



shook under their headlong gallop, and the loose planks flew like shingles beneath the feet of the horses, leaving huge gaps as they passed. Up to the howitzer, and over it, they swept with one wild shout, and had the rest of the cavalry followed, the victory would have been complete. Carrington, with the second section, boldly leaped the chasm after Armstrong, but the third faltered, and stood shivering, when the first section of Marion's cavalry came up, and bursting through the reluctant company without stopping to think, cleared the bridge.

In the meanwhile Lee, with the rest of the legion, arrived; but Armstrong's cavalry had thrown off so many planks in their fierce passage, that he was compelled to stop and replace them. This settled the fate of the day, for Armstrong, finding himself unsupported, and with only three sections of cavalry opposed to the whole British army, dashed through the discomfited soldiers, and wheeling into the woods, went off on a tearing gallop.

Coates immediately retreated to Shubrick's plantation, and made a stand. Sumpter, Lee, and Marion, though outnumbered two to one, followed on, and came upon him, with his troops drawn up in square, in front of the house. This was four o'clock, and the battle immediately commenced, and lasted till dark. Marion's men showed their training in this engagement, and fought with the coolness and steadiness of veteran troops. Fifty were killed or wounded in the action—every one of them belonging to Marion's brigade.

Sumpter finally withdrew;—not because he was

beaten, but from want of ammunition. He had not managed well, or the whole British force of six hundred would have been captured, and the bloody battle of Eutaw in all probability prevented. He and Marion separated after this—the latter operating on the Santee. While here, he heard that Colonel Harden, at the Pon-Pon, was sorely pressed by a British force of five hundred men; and taking with him two hundred picked soldiers, started off to relieve him. With his accustomed secrecy he stole across the country, and passing through the lines of the enemy's communication twice, at length—after marching a hundred miles—came up with the British near Parker's ferry. Placing his men in ambush in a swamp, he sent forward fifty of his swiftest horse to decoy them to his place of concealment. Major Frazier, who was wholly ignorant of Marion's approach, took the company for a part of Harden's force, whom he was after, and ordered his cavalry to charge. On a full gallop, and with loud shouts, they came thundering over the causeway after the flying horsemen, till they approached within fifty yards of Marion's riflemen, when a deadly volley received them. Wheeling, they attempted to charge the swamp, but a second volley made them recoil. They had now got fairly into the lane made by those marksmen, and there was no retreating. They therefore pushed on through it towards the ferry, taking the fire as they passed. The infantry followed, and there seemed not a chance of escape to the British army; but at this moment Marion's ammunition gave out, and he was compelled to order a retreat. A little more powder,

and a few more buck-shot, and the whole would have been captured. He had effected his object, however—relieved Harden, and thinned terribly the British cavalry. He then turned back, and by rapid marches succeeded in reaching Greene just before the battle of Eutaw—thus, in *six days' time, fighting one battle, and marching two hundred and fifty miles*. At Eutaw he commanded the right of the South Carolina militia, and led them nobly into action. He fought like a lion on that bloody day; and when the British army retreated, followed swiftly on their flying traces, dealing the rear-guard heavy blows in the chase.

When Greene retired to the high hills of Santee, Marion repaired to Santee river swamp, where, after having cleared an open space in the cane-brakes, he erected huts for his men. Here he was taken sick, but it did not keep him idle. He was constantly on the alert, and from his sequestered spot in the swamp, learned everything that was going on about him. Those rude huts, thatched with cane, looked lonely and wretched enough in the evening sunlight; but at the blast of a single bugle, they would pour forth as hardy and determined warriors as ever raged through a battle.

With the commencement of winter his brigade began to increase, and he again took the field. But after some little success, the mountaineers returned to their homes, leaving him weak as before. He, however, co-operated with Greene, till that able general drove the enemy into Charleston.

The field soon after being left clear, he made over

his brigade to Horry, and hastened to Jacksonborough to take his seat in the Assembly, of which he had been elected a member from St. John's, Berkley. This was in 1782; but while doing his duty as a legislator, his brigade came very near being wholly destroyed. The British, taking advantage of his absence, had sent out a detachment against it, which he no sooner heard of, than he hastened back and arrived in time to save it, though beaten in the encounter. He continued to overawe the Tories, till called by Greene to head-quarters near Charleston. With his departure, the disaffected again took up arms; but scarcely had they organized, before Marion, who had heard of their movements, suddenly appeared in their midst, and awed them into submission. Thus marching hither and thither—appearing and disappearing, like some wizard who has the power of self-transportation through the air, he kept the country quiet. But with the exception of a conflict with Major Frazier's cavalry, which he routed, he was engaged in no more battles. The British evacuated Charleston, and the country was free.

Marion then called his trusty followers together, and, amid the cedars of his encampment at Watboo, gave them his affectionate farewell, and returned to his ravaged farm. He looked mournfully over his desolate fields, and then hung up his good blade, and took the implements of agriculture.

He was, however, soon elected to the Senate of the State, and there showed the same patriotism and decision he had done in defending his country with his sword. On one occasion, a Tory presented a petition

to be exempted from the confiscation act, which had been passed during the war, and at that time received the sanction of Marion. But peace had now returned, and with it passed all feelings of vengeance in his noble heart, and he rose to speak on the petition. The poor Tory turned pale when he saw the old partisan leader about to speak, and gave up his case as hopeless; but, to his surprise, he heard him advocate it. "Then," said Marion, referring to the time the act was passed, "it was war. It is peace now. God has given us the victory; let us show our gratitude to Heaven, which we shall not do by cruelty to man." It was a noble sentiment, and worthy the patriot who uttered it. At another time a bill was introduced to exempt the revolutionary officers from all legal prosecutions for their conduct during the war. Circumstances, and the common good of the State, had compelled them to stretch their power in a way that the civil law would not sanction, and this bill was designed to secure them against annoyance. But no sooner was it read, than Marion rose to his feet, and with his solemn black eye flashing fire, demanded to have his name taken off from the list of exempted officers. He said he was friendly to the bill, but *he* would not be sheltered by it. His honor he valued more than his life, and this tacit implication that it might not be spotless, he scorned at once. Said he, "If I have given any occasion for complaint, I am ready to answer in property and person. If I have wronged any man, I am willing to make him restitution. If in a single instance in the course of my command, I have done that which

I cannot fully justify, justice requires that I should suffer for it." His name was excluded, and he stood proudly on his unsullied honor, and challenged the strictest scrutiny into his conduct during years of civil war.

Marion received no appropriation from the State for his services, though he was appointed commander of Fort Johnson, at Charleston, with a salary of about \$2,500 per annum. This was a sinecure, and the post made on purpose for him; but a lucky turn in his fortune saved him from the necessity of accepting it. Miss Mary Videau, a lady of wealth, had fallen in love with our hero, though fifty years of age. The latter was slow to discover it, but when he did, proposed and was accepted.

Retiring to his plantation, he lived happily with his bride, though she, too, was getting into the "sere and yellow leaf." In the hot summer months, he would take his old camp-bed and cooking utensils, and repair with her to the mountains. Thus he lived, honored by his country, and loved by all; and at length, at the age of sixty-three, surrendered his soul, without fear, into the hands of his Maker. He declared himself a Christian—a firm believer in all the great truths of religion.

Thus passed away this strange and noble man; but his memory lives, and the name of "Marion" will ever thrill the hearts of our youth, and nerve the patriot, in every age, to strike for freedom.



## HIS CHARACTER

In personal appearance, Marion presented a striking contrast to most of the officers in our army. It is a curious fact, that the generals of the highest grade, in both armies, during the Revolutionary war, averaged nearly two hundred pounds in weight. But Marion was a very small man, and of diminutive proportions every way. He was not only short, but remarkably thin. His countenance was swarthy, and grave in its expression, and his eye dark, solemn, and poetic. Extremely plain in his dress, and with still plainer manners, he did not strike a stranger very favorably. Reserved and silent, he seldom spoke, except when necessary, and then expressed his thoughts in the most direct and simple language he could command. These peculiarities increased the mystery which his actions threw around him, and doubtless added much to the influence he held over his band. Cool and quiet, he went on the most desperate missions without excitement—as calmly stormed through the fight, and then, in the same composed manner, drew off his men to their dark and lonely encampment. He seemed utterly destitute of passions. He possessed neither revenge, nor thirst for glory, nor love of excitement, nor desire of money or power. He showed no fondness for the table, but was abstemious as a hermit. Even the women had no influence over him; and he moved amid the turbulent scenes around him, like one whose mind is wholly absorbed on one great object, yet to be accomplished. Drinking his vinegar and water—



enough to keep any man thin—eating his coarse hominy, or rice—with the trees for his shelter, and the swamps for his retreat, he fastens himself upon our affections and interest, with a firmness nothing can shake.

Living in lawless times, and among rough and boisterous men, he retained all his delicacy of feeling, refined tastes, and scrupulous virtue. Moving in an orbit of his own, he, like Washington, was beyond the influence of others, and seemed free from the common frailties of men.

Without pay—without even the hope of victory—hunted from swamp to swamp, and chased the length and breadth of his State, he still struggled on to keep alive the waning flame of patriotism in the hearts of the inhabitants. Binding his men to him by love, rather than by commands, he would let them disband to their homes, with no security but their single promise to return. Yet that promise was never broken; and the love those stern hearts bore him, is one of the most touching incidents in his career.

As a partisan leader Marion has no equal. One cannot point out a defect in him, nor suggest a single good quality which he did not possess. To sleepless, tireless vigilance, he added an energy and perseverance that nothing could shake; and to bravery, which never deserted him, a prudence unmarred by a single rash act. Provoked into no haste, beguiled into no procrastination, unelated by success, undiscouraged by defeat, he baffled every plan of his pursuers to take him, and kept the field in the very midst

of his foes. For a long time, the only patriot who dared to lift the standard of freedom in his native State, he became the object against which the British directed all their efforts. Yet they never disbanded his corps, or broke his power. The name of Marion became a spell-word with which to conjure up the Republicans, and frighten the Tories. Seeking the recesses of the swamps by day, and stealing on his foes, like the panther, by night, his swift horsemen came and went like the invisible stroke of fate. No precaution could escape his penetrating glance, and no concealment furnish security against his deadly rifles. He seemed omnipresent to the enraged, terror-stricken loyalists; and when they deemed themselves safest, he was often nearest. And yet, not a vice sullied "his ermine character." No ferocity was mingled with his courage, and no cruelty accompanied his fierce onsets. Neither the barbarity of his enemies, nor the treason of his friends could provoke him to injustice—even the clamors of his own followers were unable to swerve his just soul from the path of integrity. Given to no excess, he asked no share of the plunder, and never used the power he possessed to gratify a single selfish passion.

His patriotism was pure and lofty as his character; and for his sufferings and losses he neither asked nor expected remuneration. His country he loved better than his life, and liberty was dearer to him than all things else on earth besides. Wealth, rank, ease, safety, all sunk before his country's claims, and he seemed to aim at nothing but its interests. His like is seldom seen.

His followers were worthy of him. Bold, fearless—true as steel in the hour of danger, they closed round him with a faith and devotion that excite our admiration, and claim our love.







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